Cuisine

food, wine & good living

ISSUE 140 MAY 2010

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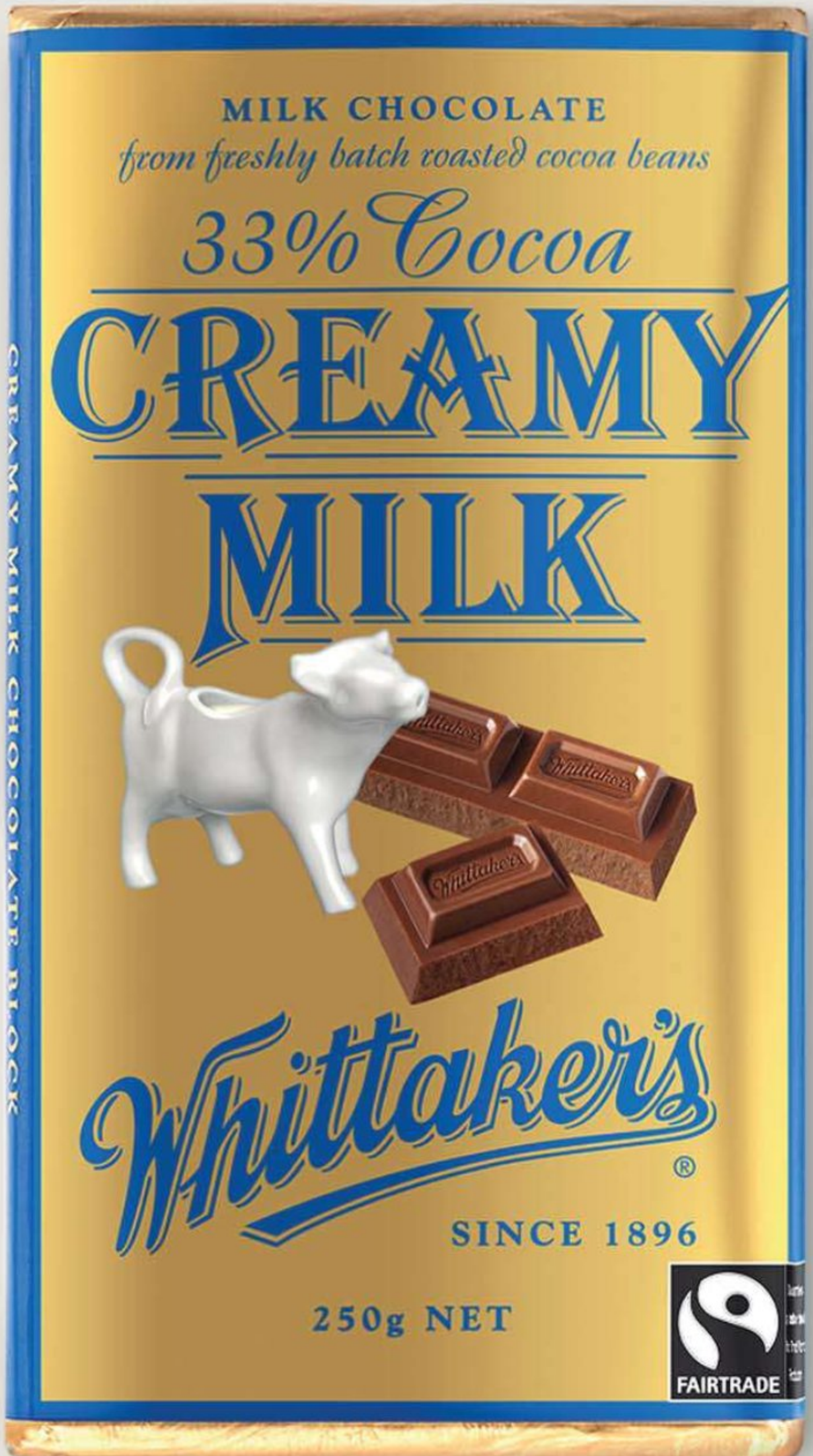
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At the recent Melbourne Food and Wine Festival masterclasses, it was refreshing to see many of the world's most exciting chefs bucking the laboratory trend and looking to the surrounding countryside for inspiration, including foraging for ingredients themselves. There was the bright, fresh food of Californian David Kinch, who has up to 165 tomato varieties growing on his restaurant's biodynamic farm, and the Dane, Mads Refslund, whose cooler climes are reflected in moody, earthy dishes that can include 15 different mushrooms.

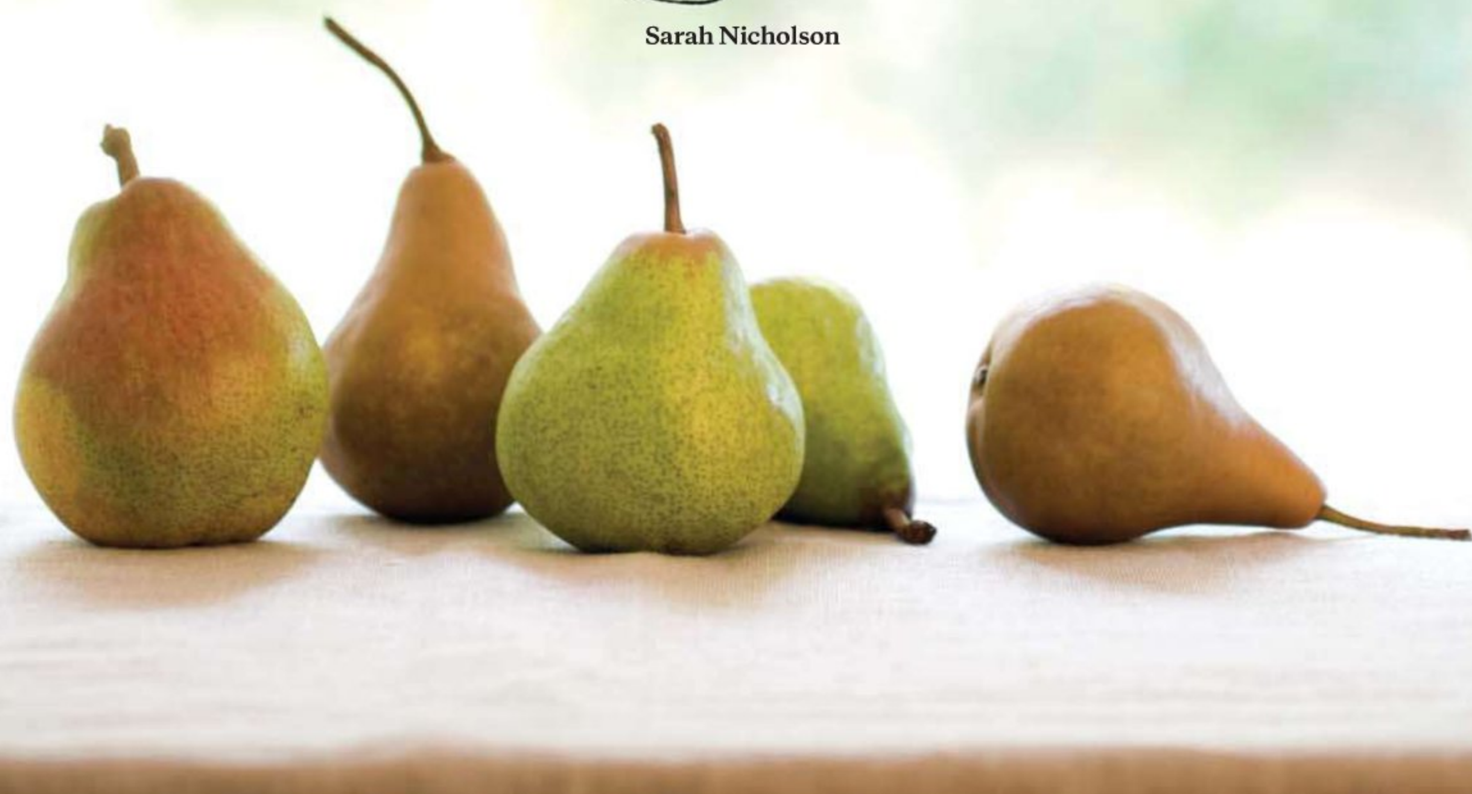
Of course, foraging is something many New Zealanders have always taken for granted. For some, it's chipping oysters off the rocks or gathering pipi. As I grew up on a farm, I have fond childhood memories of mushroom hunting – and watching strangers stopping their cars, jumping our fences and having a go, too. (Nowadays, the mushroom selection in stores is vastly improved. Our recipes on page 64 should get you inspired.)

For others, it's about moving targets: it could be the annual duck-shooting expedition or heading into the bush with bigger game in mind. As Al Brown and David Burton point out this issue, when it comes to free-range and organic, wild food is the ultimate. And even if hunting isn't your bag, the rise in quality suppliers means you can still enjoy game at home (page 82).

This is my first issue as editor of *Cuisine*, a magazine I have long admired from afar. After 14 years away from my homeland, I am thrilled to be back and working with a talented team on a magazine I know means so much to many of you. I look forward to rediscovering all this wonderful country has to offer, and hopefully meeting you along the way.

Sarah

Sarah Nicholson



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON McLEAN; PEARS BY KEN DOWNIE; DRESS BY PEARL, PEARLCULTURE.CO.NZ; PHOTOGRAPHED AT AUCKLAND'S GALA CAFE

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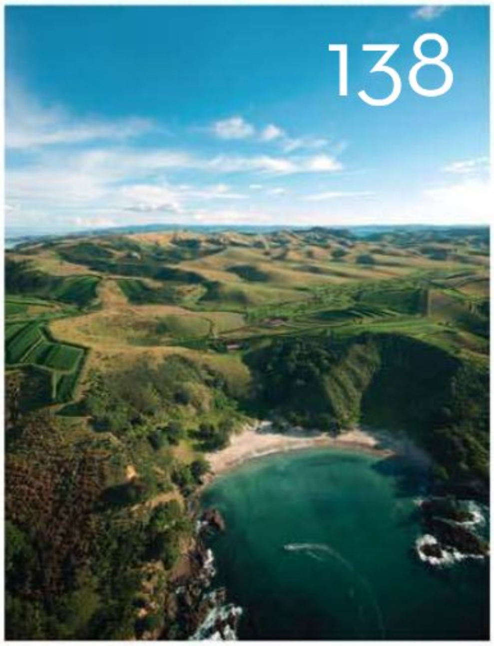












cuisine wine

cuisine travel

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Nominee, Best Drink Magazine, 2007
Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Awards for *Cuisine Wine Country 2007*

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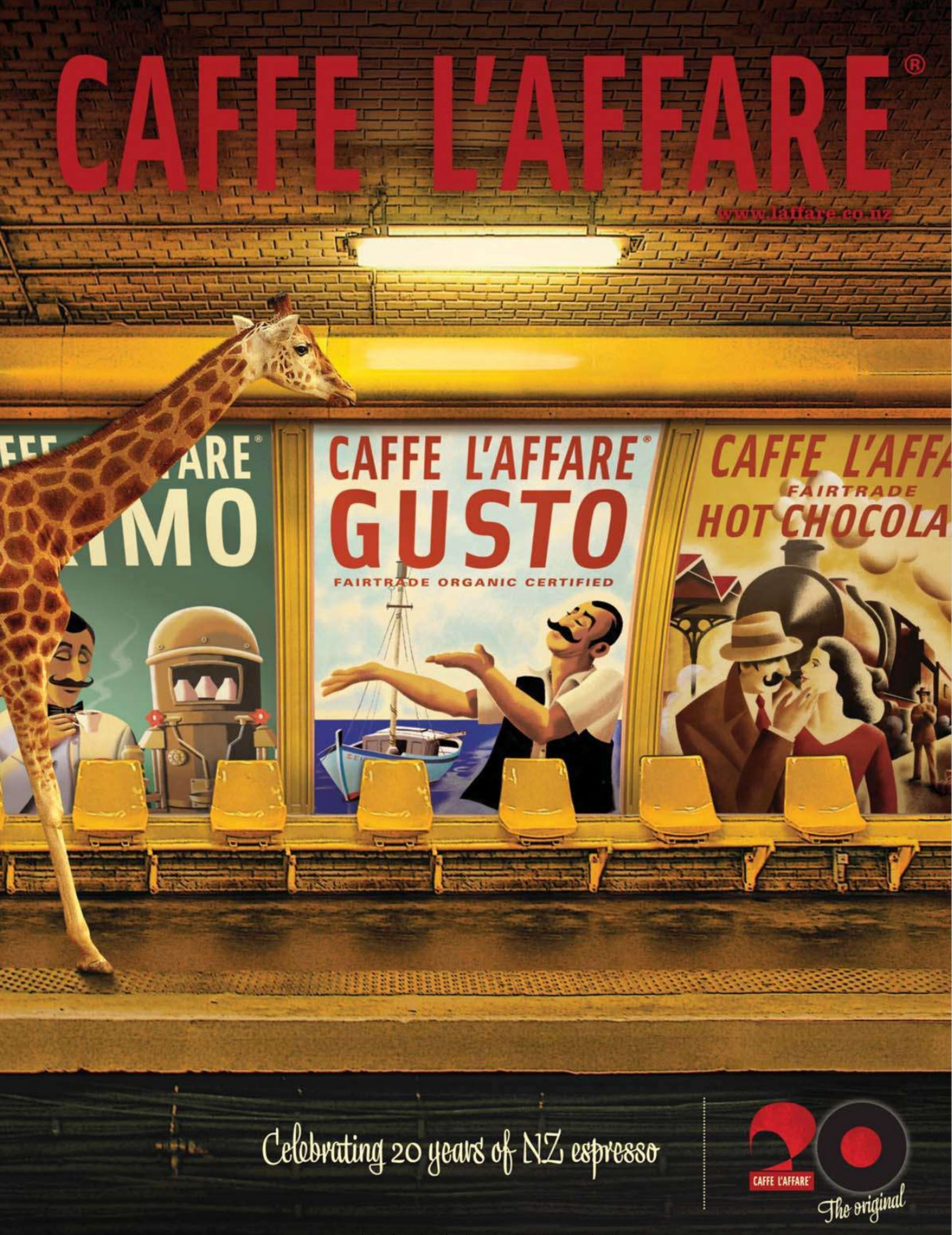
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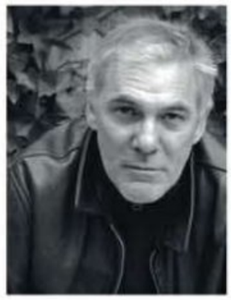
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people in the issue

KEITH AUSTIN



Originally from London's East End, Keith Austin's first job was working in a pie, mash and jellied eels shop before he landed a spot on his local newspaper. In the 30 years since, he has been, variously, a travel editor, senior feature writer and TV writer. "Eatup", his irreverent restaurant review column for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, ran for six years. He has edited two cookbooks – *Blokes* and *Seafood* – and is currently working on a pub food guide, due out later this year. He spent six months of last year living in the Marais district in Paris and failing to cook a cassoulet in a kitchen the size of a Portaloo (see page 176). He is passionate about food, drink, travel, writing, photography, soccer and eels. But not in that order.

CHARMIAN SMITH



Our woman in the deep south, Charmian Smith has always been fascinated by food and it has taken her through a surprising number of countries and cuisines – from Iran and Persian Gulf prawns fresh from the boat, to Shanghai and a still-beating snake's heart. She has sampled street food from Marrakech to Kyoto. But although she enjoys these culinary explorations, her real love is local produce. The cold southern winters and temperate summers produce distinctively flavoured produce, whether it's Oamaru potatoes, Taieri berries, Central Otago fruit and wine, Cardrona merino lamb, Southland swede, or blue cod and flounder from off the southern coasts. For almost 20 years she has been telling people about southern specialities, both in *Cuisine* and in the *Otago Daily Times*.

EARL WAN



From white rose to red rose to red flag, Earl Wan came a long way to photograph this issue's feature on Hong Kong's culinary underworld. Born in Yorkshire, he crossed the border into Lancashire to study illustration and animation in Manchester, before making the big step to China, where he now plies his trade as a freelance photographer in bustling Hong Kong. As a resident, Wan was able to offer a healthy dose of local knowledge as he and writer Ray McVinnie uncovered the unsignposted world of the city's private kitchens (see page 148). With a multifaceted portfolio that includes portraiture and fashion (his work has appeared in *China Vogue*), Wan says he walks this ever-changing city every day. "Whether it's people or buildings, they come and go very quickly."





As poor students, our meals consisted of 101 variations on mince and sausages, until I was able to get a copy of your fabulous magazine from my parents

WINNING LETTER

Rachael Harris has won a mixed case of The Ned wines – four each of Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Pinot Gris 2009 and Pinot Noir 2007 (see below).

My partner and I are both uni students, and – as is the curse of studenthood – are rather poor. As such, our meals have consisted of 101 variations on mince and sausages, until recently, when I was able to get a copy of your fabulous magazine from my parents. Much to our delight, we found varied and interesting recipes which were quite economical (with the occasional swap of ingredients). While our friends continue to chow down on such balanced and nutritious student fare as the trusty pie sandwich (a frozen $1 pie between two pieces of budget white bread), we are enjoying food of a much higher standard. Thank you very much for educating our palates, as we educate our minds.
Rachael Harris, via email

I want to congratulate you on the *Cuisine* Artisan Awards. It was great to read the winners' stories in your March issue. When you're buying a product, it makes all the difference to know the blood, sweat and tears behind it, as well as be reminded of the challenges that face businesses doing things the hard way in search of excellence. I take my hat off to them. Please keep up your support of these small producers.
Francesca Baird, via email

While staying with a friend in country Victoria recently, I had the chance to pick up an issue of your magazine. I had 30 minutes to kill and it was the only thing lying around to read. Wow! When I started flicking through I was suitably impressed. Coming from Orange, NSW, the new "Food Capital of Australia", I have a huge interest in all things food. I loved the magazine and promptly went out and bought my own copy and can't wait to use it to inspire my students when I return to the classroom to teach food technology and hospitality.
Jane Edwards, via email

Until recently, reading *Cuisine* involved flicking through to find pictures of "flash cars" for my three-year-old son to look at, and hoping there was a recipe I could drool over on the facing page, while I made approving noises about the car. However, my son was utterly captured by the fish on the front cover of your January edition and, to my delight, pored over the rest of the magazine looking for "yummy" fish. I was thrilled when your March issue was greeted with the same enthusiastic search for pictures of "yummy" things. Thanks for your part in transforming my kitchen helper into a true junior foodie.
Melinda Borland, North Shore City

Thanks for your feature on steak in the last issue, especially the tips in the "beefeater's guide". Like a lot of men, I always thought I was pretty good at cooking meat on the barbie but, as my wife now points out, that wasn't really the case... Next summer is looking up.
Matthew John, via email

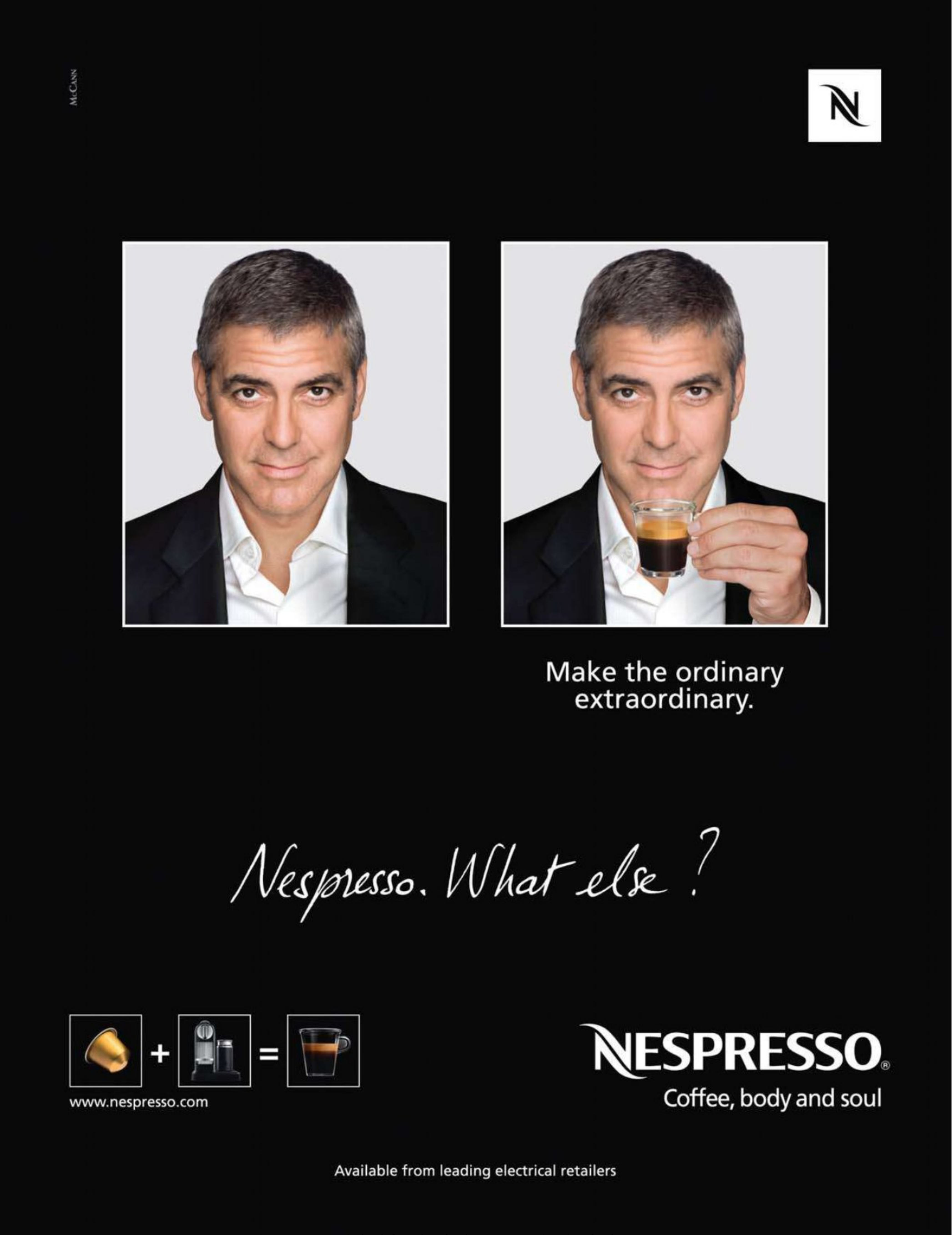
Due to space restrictions, all these letters have been abridged.

RIVER OF DREAMS

Seven years ago, veteran winemaker Brent Marris finally found his holy grail: a site bordering Marlborough's Waihopai River. With its "three distinct terraces of clays and ancient river shingles", the new home for Marisco Vineyards offered potential for variation and complexity rare in a single-vineyard site, let alone one so well placed. Marris, who fondly recalls his youthful tramps in the area, named his wines The Ned, after the rugged hill rising south-east of the vineyard. Today, from still-youthful vines, The Ned continues to garner accolades: the 2009 Sauvignon Blanc has just won a Blue-Gold Award and made the Top 100 at the 2010 Sydney International Wine Competition.



For more see marisco.co.nz


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Edited by Toni Mason

news&views



MIKE HEYDON

CURE BRILLIANCE

A WAIKANAE BUTCHER TAKES ON ONE OF THE GREAT HAMS OF EUROPE

Sadly for would-be makers of airdried ham, New Zealand is a high-humidity country a long way from the dry, cool sierras of Spain. So until some nutter decides to set up a curing house on the arid lower reaches of the Southern Alps, we can never hope to replicate fully Spain's jamón serrano or Italy's Parma ham.

But in the meantime we've got Waipalma Ham, the nine-month-cured version of which is the closest I've yet tasted to the real thing either here or in Australia. The texture is a little soft, but the all-important flavour is there.

The Waipalma name is undeniably cheeky, but, hey, there aren't any palms in Parma.

Maker Andrew Stroombergen of Waikanae Butchery has kindly offered to share his secret: the meat, from Canterbury's Murrellen Pork, is kept raw and heavily salted like Parma ham, but instead of being hung in the rafters of a mountain lodge, the hams are hung in a fridge where they cure for between three and nine months. Obviously, the older, the better; in March, Andrew laid down a new batch of Waipalma for Christmas.

Once you know this secret, it seems glaringly obvious: I mean, everybody who has ever left uncovered food in the fridge knows it dries out.

Waipalma features on the Urban Harvest website (see page 26) and popularity is high, so to boost turnover he will try cutting the pork into pieces before hanging to see whether that can speed up the process.

Success took Andrew two years – not too bad in the "Parma ham" world. But, he says, "Someone told me I couldn't do it and I thought 'Stuff you. I'll give it a crack'." **DAVID BURTON**





Hill Street greens

Launched in February, the Hill Street Farmers' Market is central Wellington's first real farmers' market, in the sense that you can buy fresh produce directly from those who grow it.

Fifteen to 20 stallholders set up each Saturday morning in the Wellington Cathedral carpark, including Wairarapa organic grower Jeremy Howden (left), renowned for his fennel, radicchio and celeriac, and Jean Kibblewhite of Splashzone, who sells fish caught by her husband, Richard, off the Wairarapa coast the day before. There are also unusual vegetables, such as Italian puntarelle (wild chicory), to be had from Wairarapa Eco Farm, heritage apple varieties and tree-ripened stone fruit.

Thorndon Farmers' Market Trust chair Jo Freeman (see page 26) says she was driven to start the market as all Wellington's good food shops were in the CBD, leaving no local shopping opportunities for the 22,000 households within a 15-minute drive of Hill St. The area is deserted over the weekend, so there is ample parking.

The trust also supports education about sustainable, locally grown food.
DAVID BURTON

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL
JACQUI DIXON



With an entire shop of gourmet ingredients at her disposal, there are no prizes for guessing what Jacqui Dixon cooks at home.

"My home pantry is full of our products," says the co-owner of Sabato, which for the past 17 years has sold directly to the Auckland public from its Mt Eden shop, and to the rest of the country via mail order and the internet.

Arriving home at six o'clock, she and husband Phil Dixon might boil an exotic penne made from an ancient wheat strain discovered in an Egyptian tomb during the 1970s. Over it she may pour a salsina of sundried tomatoes, capers and olive oil, then mix through Ortiz anchovies and Sicilian dried herbs.

"And that's dinner!"

Another easy meal option involves Ferron carnaroli rice, which can be made into a risotto without stirring.

The Dixons often dine out and they always like to catch up on how local chefs might be using their products. "Often it's technical stuff I'd never do myself, such as the Forum Chardonnay vinegar Clooney's Des Harris puts into the apple sorbet he serves with oysters." **DAVID BURTON**

Gamebird season opens on 1 May and from 2 May until 27 June, in conjunction with the **2010 Gamebird Food Festival**, selected restaurants will cook harvested birds. Most need 48 hours' notice. For participating restaurants, see gamebirdfoodfestival.co.nz

GLASS ACT This elegant modern-meets-retro range of hand-blown glasses and bowls is produced in Auckland by Lukeke Design, the joint venture of partners Luke Jacomb and Katherine Rutecki. For stockists, ph: 09-302 3434.



MARKETS, NICOLA EDMONDS; GLASSES, JASON CREAGHAN; JACQUI DIXON, KEN DOWNIE

From the ashes, a gem

Café society in Wellington's Lyall Bay hasn't been the same since the Maranui Surf Lifesaving Club Café was so badly damaged by fire last year the council wanted it demolished.

A petition from club members and café patrons put paid to that and the landmark building is being repaired and refitted. It is expected to reopen in June.

Due to popular demand, the café owners have opened a baby Maranui, Queen Sally's Diamond Deli, just around the corner. The coffee is great and the menu, too – especially the salads that were such a hit at Maranui.

In essence it's a café and takeaway bar, but the deli side is more than just a name, as the pyramids of stacked tins attest. Co-owner Katie Richardson says they'll be guided by what customers want, but at the moment their stock includes Huffman's Hot Sauce, artisan sausages and boutique cheeses – none of which is found in local supermarkets.

Since Queen Sally's is done out like a posh 1950s grocery, it does no harm to display some colourful brands of vintage Italian tinned tomatoes. Co-owner Matt Wilson, a long-term collector of shop memorabilia, began with a sign from an early Courtenay Place deli that formerly hung on his own kitchen wall. To this he has added a prime beef cuts mural from a 1950s butcher's and a department store rocking horse to enchant the kids.

Asked about the name, Richardson says it began as Queen's, after the location, Queen's Drive. Then someone added Diamond Deli.

"There's no Queen Sally, but Sally rhymes nicely with deli, don't you think?" **DAVID BURTON**



From left: Co-owners Katie Richardson, Matt Wilson and Bronwyn Kelly

A RUM STEAL New Zealand's newest rum won a double gold medal at the 2010 San Francisco World Spirits Competition in March – not bad for something barely on the market at the time. Stolen Gold Rum is made in Trinidad, then brought here by two Kiwi guys who got in touch with their inner rum runners. Jamie Duff and Roger Homes, former lawyer and architect respectively, recommend the gold rum be taken neat or in a daiquiri. Its sibling white rum won a bronze at the same competition.

Available at the time of writing in select Auckland bars and from Betty's Liquor Store in Newmarket. See stolenrum.com



WE FANCY

- The hardly fanciful idea of Bluff oysters being available alive in the shell – why can't we have them?
- Kohu Road's new sorbet range: chocolate, mango, lemon and passionfruit. Available (so far) from Farro Fresh, Auckland, and Moore Wilson, Wellington
- Bread from the Store on Kohi, Auckland. In fact, nearly everything – rotating takeout dinners and signature ice-creams, all made on site

DIAMOND DELI, MIKE HEYDON



Art for Work's Sake

The fine Esther Diamond range of art on fabric, which includes tea towels, napkins and bedlinen, has grown with these new Home Maid aprons made of drill cotton. Dick Frizzell's "Hand in Glove" design (left), also available on tea towels, and Fane Flaws' "Bird Tea Set" and both available in red and black. For stockists, see estherdiamond.com

IN SEASON PASSIONFRUIT



The appearance of passionfruit signals the end of summer. Though available from late January, its season peaks in April.

A native of southern Brazil, *Passiflora edulis* gained its English name thanks to the habit of Jesuit missionaries using its striking flowers to illustrate the crucifixion.

New Zealand's first commercial plantings were in Kerikeri in 1927. But today it is mostly cultivated in the Bay of Plenty, where the purple variety is the only type grown commercially, though there is a yellow version, too.

Passionfruit grows on an evergreen vine and the fruit turns from green to purple as it ripens. They are ready when they fall to the ground, but taste best when left to wrinkle for a few days.

It is delicious in puddings, used as a topping for cheesecakes and pavlova, and in icings for cakes. It can be made into a syrup by heating equal quantities of sugar and water, and around half that in passionfruit pulp until the sugar has dissolved. Use it to pour over ice-cream or seasonal fruit.

Make a passionfruit butter in the same way you would make a lemon curd (you may want to add some lemon juice and sieve out most of the seeds). Spread it on toasted fruit bread, over pancakes or to fill small sweet tartlets.

Passionfruit also freezes well – simply remove the pulp and freeze in ice-cube trays. When frozen put into ziplock bags – it will keep for up to six months. When you want to use it, bring it out to defrost and use it as you would fresh.

GINNY GRANT

The Auckland Museum is showing an exhibition that uses food to tell the story of Auckland and the myriad cultural groups who live in the city. Kai to Pie: Auckland on a Plate opens on 12 June.

FINE HOME DINING

Sue Higgins of Nelson was the lucky winner of our Clooney dinner – with head chef Des Harris and co-owner Tony Stewart putting on an eight-course dinner in her home for her and seven friends. The fine food and wines were provided by Sabato. "Just wonderful. We delighted in everything," says Sue. "It took me four days to come down."



TRAFFIC

Entrepreneurial Auckland publican Luke Dallow has upped the food focus at his popular Freemans Bay bar, Sale St, lending his name to a "casual fine-dining" restaurant, **DALLOW'S**. Former French Café chef Nick Honeyman puts out a tight, daily-changing menu. See sale-st.co.nz

Greek-born Giorgos Damiris and his Kiwi wife, Megan, have transformed the former Joll Rd dairy in Havelock North into the retro-style **MILKBAR**, complete with old-fashioned shakes and sodas, outdoor seating and local and Greek deli goods. Over winter they plan to cook takeout Greek meals such as moussaka and pastitsio. 8 Joll Rd, ph: 06-877 7779.

Wellington has two new coffee houses. **CUSTOMS BREW BAR** at 39 Ghuznee St offers nine single-origin beans from Coffee Supreme and four methods of brewing, including espresso from New Zealand's first Slayer machine. **MEMPHIS BELLE**, in the beleaguered Oaks Complex in Cuba Mall, uses Napier's Flight Coffee.

Newtown has a new bar, **MONTEREY**, opened by the people who operated Kreutzburg Summer Café in Cuba St.

Davis Trading, the original gourmet foods warehouse in Petone, has opened a Wellington branch (cnr Taranaki St and Karo Drive), selling Mexican and Jamaican products in addition to their Asian mainstays.

APRONS, JASON CREAGHAN; PASSIONFRUIT, MARC O FINLEY/PHOTONEWZEALAND; CLOONEY DINNER, KEN DOWNIE



UNDER THE GRILL

Simon Gault is executive chef of the Nourish Group, which includes top restaurants like Euro and Jervois Steak House in Auckland, and Shed 5 and Pravda in Wellington, and an engaging judge on *Masterchef* New Zealand.

When did you first know food was your thing? The interest was there from primary school days. Our whole family was, and still is, very comfortable and competent in the kitchen. I am grateful my parents realised early that my determination to become a chef was real and that they should be supportive.

What's your first food memory? As an infant, I had a weak oesophagus, causing some spectacular rejections of food, so my first memories are not all that wonderful and there was a strange reluctance on the part of adults to have me near them after meals. This was a mercifully short episode.

What is your ideal dinner party menu? A mussel starter, properly cooked to just open, all the tough connective muscle and foot removed, served on the half-shell with a smoked chipotle Tabasco butter, then a long, slow rare-roasted beef rib with fresh horseradish sauce, herb-coated roasted parsnip and potato with wilted buttered spinach. After that, gorgonzola dolce cheese and, to finish, a meringue roulade filled with *salsa fragola al balsamico* (strawberry and aged balsamic conserve).

Who would be your dream dinner guests? Since we're talking of dreaming, I would love to be able to serve a meal to my grandparents on both sides, who sadly are no longer with us.

What would be your death row dinner? Several exceptionally abrasive zucchini and a very long length of extraordinarily strong spaghetti with a getaway pumpkin at the bottom of the wall.

What's your pick of food destination/s? Spain followed immediately by Italy. Asia beckons, too. I do combine traditional European with Asian influences with, I believe, complementary blending of flavours and textures.

What's your idea of the worst food crime? Packet béarnaise sauce leaves me absolutely cold. An incinerated steak topped with a cardboard-flavoured sauce is culinary vandalism.

Who is your food hero? Without hesitation Ferran Adrià of El Bulli in Spain assumes this title. His culinary imagination is utterly astounding.

What's coming next in the food world? More adventurous dining and a willingness to accept that mother didn't necessarily know best.

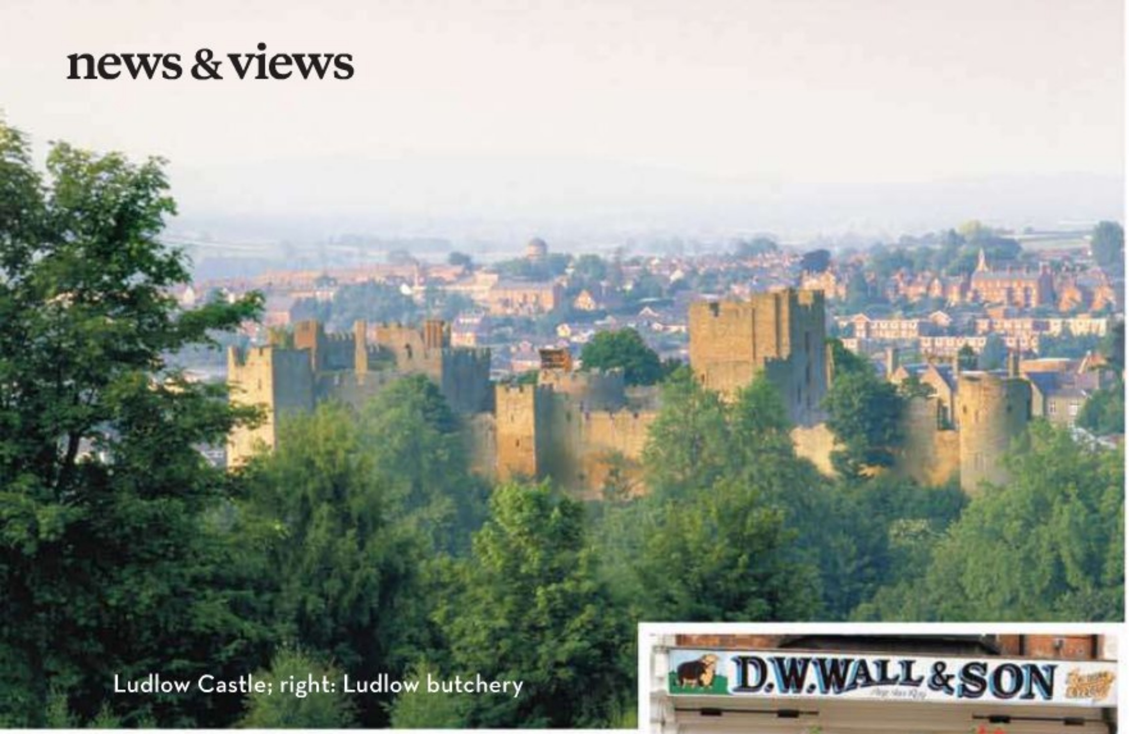
Why did the chicken cross the road? I believe the motivation was the Asian gentleman with the cleaver standing on the same side as the chicken.

Chef **Anna Hansen**, of The Modern Pantry in London's Clerkenwell, has won the New Zealander of the Year (UK) Award 2010



SAUCE, JASON CREAGHAN

Meat's Needs Boomrock retreat near Wellington has been producing and serving venison sausages since opening in 1997. Now the famous little bangers have a bedmate in the form of Maharaja Sauce, made from an old family recipe handed down by Boomrock's head chef Mark Hartstonge's mum. "The sausages are outstanding and the sauce graces our table with frightening regularity," says chef Al Brown. Both are available in Wellington at Moore Wilson and the central city New World; the sausages are sold at Auckland's Farro Fresh, with the sauce hopefully joining them soon.



Ludlow Castle; right: Ludlow butchery





KINGS OF THE CASTLE

At the last annual Ludlow Food Festival, 20,000 people converged on the ruins of Ludlow Castle. Started in 1995, its simple aim is to support the bevy of small food and drink producers in this Shropshire market town. Nowadays, festival-goers queue from the early hours for tickets to events such as the Sausage Trail and the Real Ale Trail, while the Ludlow area has become a hotspot of Michelin-starred restaurants.

Outside the festival, a good one-stop introduction to the foods of Shropshire is the Ludlow Food Centre, set on the Earl of Plymouth's Oakley Park Estate. It has eight food production areas, including a butcher, a bakery and a jam- and pickle-making centre, all of which can be viewed through large glass windows. All the beef, lamb and Gloucester Old Spot pork here comes from the estate, as does much of the game and vegetables. All told, 80 per cent of the food is from Shropshire and the surrounding counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Powys.

In town there are some quirky food shops, including four traditional butchers, each specialising in different areas, from rare breeds to pork pies, a regional cheese shop, fragrant bakeries (Price & Sons on the square sells an award-winning perry and pear sourdough), the century-old De Grey's tearooms (in a 450-year-old building) and a farmers' market. **foodfestival.co.uk, ludlow.org.uk, ludlowfoodcentre.co.uk**

FIONA SMITH

RAISING THE BAR

The **Crazy Styles** has been a stayer on the cocktail list at Harry's Bar & Dining in Nelson since it opened in 2006. The really crazy thing about it is the mix of fresh lime and mint, cranberry juice and ginger beer is on the non-alcoholic cocktail list, but people keep asking for it with vodka. You'd be mad not to.

Insider's guide to cider



Hereford is a gorgeous place to drive around – the narrow lanes, huge hedgerows and concentration of half-timbered houses transport you to the England of childhood story books. The area also has a strong tradition of cider-making, and the cider and architecture trails happily intertwine.

Better still, there is a cider cycle route, which has the advantage of putting your head above the hedgerows for great views, and allows a fraction more cider intake than when driving. Most of the cider farms have cellar doors and there are some award-winning boutique producers.

It was on the cider trail that I discovered perry – the mellow and fruity pear cider made from the small, fibrous perry pears. Perry has seen a huge revival in Britain, but there is a bit of debate about what goes in it. Purists say perry must be made with the perry pear, but some say other pears are fine. One grower told me you plant a perry pear tree for your grandchildren, they take so long to fruit.

THE CIDER REVIVAL has hit New Zealand, with lots of great craft ciders to try, but if you are not so keen on the stronger flavour of apple, give pear a go. The Kingston Cider Company in Napier makes New Zealand's only perry (pictured left). However, while it's a 100 per cent pear juice, it's not made with perry pears. A very nice drop, though (see recipe for perry gravy page 92). visitherefordshire.co.uk ciderroute.co.uk/site/index.html kingstoncider.co.nz

FIONA SMITH

LUDLOW CASTLE, BRITAIN IN VIEW/PHOTOLIBRARY; BUTCHER'S SHOP, NIELS SCHIPPER; COCKTAIL, KEN DOWNIE; PERRY, JASON CREAGHAN


Frette



Baker


Lalique


Verellen

You are invited to Cavit & Co with Cuisine and NZ HOUSE & GARDEN

Join *Cuisine* editor, Sarah Nicholson, and *NZ House & Garden* editor, Sally Duggan, for a special event at Cavit & Co in Parnell from 6pm-8pm on Tuesday 4 May.

View the superb range of furniture and accessories at Cavit & Co, including Ralph Lauren Home, Frette bedlinen, Lalique crystal, and furniture from Baxter, Baker, McGuire and more. Plus enjoy some of New Zealand's finest Chardonnay and Viognier from the tastings featured in *Cuisine*'s May issue, served with award-winning Kapiti cheeses.

You will receive a 25 per cent discount off any Cavit & Co purchases made on the evening* and a gift of the new *NZ House & Garden* special collector's edition, *Four Seasons*, with each purchase.

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6pm-8pm
547a Parnell Rd,
Parnell, Auckland

RSVP

RSVP to Lynne@cavitco.com
by Thursday 29 April
(include in the subject line
the number attending)
Numbers are limited

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laffare.co.nz

ENTRY DETAILS

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Caffe L'affare 20th Birthday
Cuisine
PO Box 5317
Wellesley St
Auckland 1141

or email competitions@cuisine.co.nz with Caffe L'affare in the subject line.

Terms and conditions The prize is one of 20 Caffe L'affare 20th birthday packs as detailed. Employees of Fairfax Magazines and Caffe L'affare, associated sponsors and their immediate families and agencies are not permitted to enter. The judge's decision on any aspect of the competition is final and binding on every person who enters. No correspondence will be entered into. The prize is not transferable nor able to be redeemed for cash. The winner will be notified by phone. Entries must be received on or before 27 June 2010. Competition available in New Zealand only.



FRESH FROM THE NET

Tired of getting her kids in the car and battling Wellington traffic to reach butchers, fishmongers and artisan bakers, lawyer Jo Freeman decided there had to be an easier way to shop.

Inspired by the US site foodzie.com, she began Urban Harvest, New Zealand's first online fresh food market, connecting artisan producers with busy capital-city consumers. More than 47 producers have signed up from the lower North Island and top of the South – orchardists, a fisherman, dairy farmers, bakers, butchers, organic market gardeners, coffee-roasters and chocolatiers. "We have over 800 products online now," says Freeman.

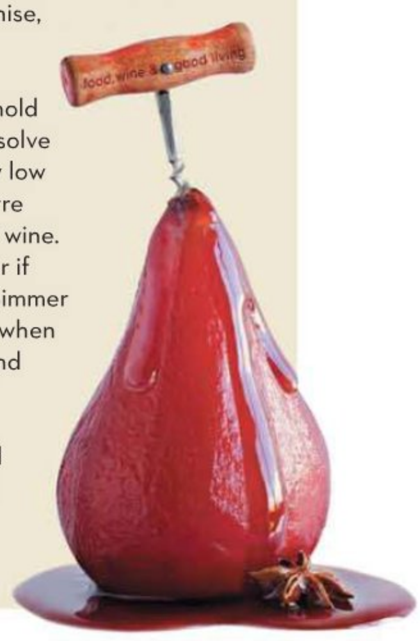
Orders placed on a Sunday are delivered to Wellington homes and offices on a Tuesday. For the Friday delivery, orders must be placed by Wednesday night. The delay between ordering and delivering is because Urban Harvest does not hold stock of perishable foods. It is all ordered in fresh and producers need time to pick, bake or catch the food before sending it to Wellington. Since it doesn't sit around on shelves or pass through numerous middlemen, the food stays fresh. The producers benefit, too: they get 80 per cent of the retail price whereas selling in a supermarket, they receive only 40 to 50 per cent. **urbanharvest.co.nz**

Urban Harvest is New Zealand's first online fresh food market, connecting more than 47 artisan producers with busy capital-city consumers

DAVID BURTON

Spiced Red Wine-Poached Pears

To make the pears on the cover, put 500ml red wine (Merlot works well), 175g sugar, 3 whole star anise, 3 cloves, 1 cinnamon stick and 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, in a saucepan large enough to hold 6 pears. Bring to the boil to dissolve the sugar then reduce to a very low simmer. Peel 6 firm pears (Beurre Bosc work well) and add to the wine. Top up with a little boiling water if necessary to cover the pears. Simmer for 30-40 minutes until tender when pierced with a knife. Remove and chill. Bring the wine to the boil and boil rapidly to reduce to a syrup. Strain out the spices and chill the syrup. Serve the pears with extra red wine syrup and mascarpone or cream.



food for thought

Cerebral and sensory fusions made for a heady brew at the recent Melbourne Food and Wine Festival masterclasses, says **Ray McVinnie**

A feast of stimulating demonstrations from leading chefs was served in the culinary masterclasses held at the Langham Hotel in Melbourne as part of the annual Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.

Exquisite technique and high regard for texture were evident in Sydney chef Peter Gilmore's dessert of a perfectly spherical, caramel-coated, poached meringue filled with nectarine purée served on a velvety vanilla custard with frozen shards of nectarine granita.

David Kinch, of California, continued the Alice Waters tradition of using produce from selected growers but giving it his own spin by celebrating biodynamic produce with dishes like panfried baby abalone with a seaweed persillade, poetic in its simplicity and purity. These are but two examples.

Other chefs presented food that went beyond dining as a purely sensory experience. Similar to conceptual artists, these chefs are giving their food an intellectual spin. This was not the sort of scary transformation of food into unexpected substances as seen in manifestations of molecular gastronomy.

Demonstrations by chefs like Danish Mads Refslund of MR restaurant in Copenhagen and Italian Massimo Bottura of the celebrated Osteria Francescana in Modena revealed a much friendlier and more intriguing trend.

Put simply, they use their food to symbolise things like memories and experiences and to illustrate ideas. Their food is accessible as they ensure it can be enjoyed on a gustatory level if that is all the diner is interested in. But they enhance the experience by adding a fascinating intellectual layer.

Why bother? It reminds me of what Australian writer Barbara Santich says in her book *Looking for Flavour* – that complete gastronomy, or appreciation of all that food means, occurs when sensory and intellectual experiences of food are fused. Both these chefs draw on personal experiences to inspire their culinary creativity, which adds a theatricality and human interest to what would otherwise be a plate of, albeit delicious, food.



Mads Reflund's food draws on a refreshing range of Nordic ingredients. One of his signature dishes is called "Burnt Fields: textures and perfumes of late summer scorched fields" – using smoky, al dente root vegetables and truffles, it's a reference to the Danish custom of burning off the croplands at the end of summer. He also reinvents the rather dismal traditional Danish dish of bread soaked in beer, turning it into a lip-smacking creamy, salty-caramel dessert.

His masterclass, "How Not to Drown a Fish", reflected his belief that seafood is often overcooked and drowned in rich sauces rather than being "cooked raw" or barely cooked, as he illustrated with his frothy, pale-yellow corn and underdone crayfish soup.

Bottura's playful dish of eel with polenta was based on traditional Italian cuisine, but represented an eel's journey from the sea in Venice along the Po River, using ingredients characteristic of the regions traversed on the way, such as the crab apples of Mantua and saba, the grape must syrup of Emilia-Romagna.

The intellectual aspect of these dishes is there to be enjoyed if desired and doesn't detract from a good meal. Reflund and Bottura turn their dishes into food not just for the body, but also the soul.

Ray McVinnie travelled to Melbourne on Qantas, which offers three daily services to Melbourne from Auckland and a daily service from Wellington. See qantas.com or ph: 0800-767 400.







Above, from top: Mads Refslund and signature dish "Burnt Fields"; Massimo Bottura; David Kinch













Above: Brenton Low of À Deco in Whangarei; left: Helen Mason and Grant Cockroft of Two Chefs, Dunedin; below: Supreme Winner Laurent Loudeac

THE CHEESE BOARD

The stars were out the night Kapiti held a dinner to celebrate its 2009 Kapiti Chef Collection, a competition challenging chefs to create an original dish using Kapiti Cheese.

Notable New Zealanders such as actors Jennifer Ward-Lealand, Michael Hurst and Robyn Malcolm, and author Emily Perkins among others gathered at Gala Café in Mt Eden to dine on the winning and finalist dishes.

Sam Hunt delivered grace, Conrad Aiken's "Music I Heard", before the first of the eight courses was served.

Each course was well matched with wines, including the 2007 Syrah from Matariki winemaker Rod McDonald's own label, No 8, with the Kapiti Kotuku and mushroom toasted steak "sanga" by Brenton Low of À Deco.

The Supreme Winner was Kapiti Kikorangi Tortellini on Creamed Leek with Microgreens and Parma Ham, by Laurent Loudeac, head chef of Wellington's Hippopotamus restaurant.

The excellent finalists were À Deco, Whangarei; Two Fifteen Bistro & Wine Bar, Auckland; Mount Bistro Restaurant, Mt Maunganui; Plateau Restaurant & Bar, Taupo; The General Practitioner, Wellington; The Lakes Restaurant at Clearwater, Christchurch; and Two Chefs Bistro, Dunedin.

See kapiticollection.co.nz

ULTIMATE CHEESE GIVEAWAY WITH KAPITI

To celebrate Kapiti's success at the recent *Cuisine* NZ Champions of Cheese Awards, *Cuisine* and Kapiti are giving you and five friends the chance to win the Ultimate Cheese Experience.

Hosted at the Kapiti Store in Auckland's gorgeously restored Elliott Stables, you'll have the opportunity to taste and explore the six categories of cheese – fresh, white, semi-soft, washed rind, hard and blue – and Kapiti's cheese specialists will walk you through how best to handle, store and present the cheeses.

This interactive evening will see you master the matching of Kapiti cheeses with complementary wines and other delicious accompaniments.

TO ENTER write your name, address and daytime phone number on the back of an envelope and send to: Ultimate Cheese Experience, c/- *Cuisine*, PO Box 5317, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141.

Entries must be received by 27 June 2010.

Prize must be taken by 30 November 2010 and travel is not included.

diary dates

MAY

8 **WINE AND MUSIC TASTING, SCENIC CELLARS, TAUPO** As part of the Erupt Lake Taupo Festival, wine writer Jo Burzynska takes guests through a wine tasting pairing musical tracks with six different wines. 5pm and 7pm. erupt.co.nz

14-16 **The Food Show Wellington, Westpac Stadium.** foodshow.co.nz

22 **ATA RANGI WINEMAKERS DINNER, HUKA LODGE** Ata Rangi's Clive Paton and his family will present wines from their cellars at a gala five-course dinner designed to match the wines. hukalodge.co.nz

28 **GALA AWARDS DINNER** at the International Chardonnay Challenge, hosted by John Hawkesby at Gisborne's Wharf Shed 3. internationalchardonnaychallenge.com

JUNE

12-13 **THE MANAWATU WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL, PALMERSTON NORTH** Wineries, boutique food producers and cooking demos at the Awapuni Racing & Function Centre. mwff.co.nz

15-17 **HOT RED HAWKE'S BAY,** Christchurch (Tues 15), Wellington (Wed 16), Auckland (Thurs 17). Meet the winemakers and taste their wines. Tickets limited to 200 per venue, so bookings essential. Sales open 19 April at ticketek.co.nz

26 **CHRIS DONNELLAN AT HUKA LODGE** The head chef at Melbourne's Gingerboy presents his Asian-inspired cuisine at Huka Lodge. hukalodge.co.nz

JULY

24 **Winter Food & Wine Weekend, The Farm at Cape Kidnappers** Melbourne chef Josh Emett (Maze) and Felton Road winemaker Blair Walter are the guests. capekidnappers.com

AUGUST

14 **WINTER FOOD & WINE WEEKEND, THE FARM AT CAPE KIDNAPPERS** Renowned wine writers James Halliday and Bob Campbell MW host The Great Pinot Noir Challenge. capekidnappers.com

Cuisine RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR 2009 IN ASSOCIATION WITH Mercedes-Benz

Dine with Cuisine

Join us at the table at two winning restaurants from the 2009 *Cuisine* NZ Restaurant of the Year Awards, held in association with Mercedes-Benz. Each restaurant has created a special set menu with wines to match.

BEST NEIGHBOURHOOD RESTAURANT



MOLTEN

422 Mt Eden Rd, Mt Eden, Auckland
Dinner 6pm Mon 17 May and Mon 24 May
Price $135 per person
Bookings ph: 09-638 7236

Such is the local support for the neighbourhood eatery of chef-patron Michael Van de Elzen and his wife, Belinda (a chef herself, who takes the front-of-house role), that three entrées are highlighted on their menu as "untouchables". This menu will include pearl barley and French goat's cheese stuffed courgette with candied pumpkin and truffle dressing; sesame salt and pepper squid with cucumber, peanut relish and chilli honey; braised venison pie with cherry relish, gingernut crumbs and a hint of coffee; veal involtini with a mushroom ragoût and white bean purée; and Valrhona chocolate torte with whisky ice-cream and tobacco syrup.

HOPGOOD'S

284 Trafalgar St, Nelson
Dinner 6.30pm Mon 10 May
Price $175 per person
Bookings ph: 03-545 7191

BEST CASUAL DINING / REGIONAL



Chef Kevin Hopgood's move from his native England to New Zealand was a bonus for Nelson. His classical training came with a respect for quality produce and wines, and it shows. Matched with wines from Neudorf (this year celebrating its 30th vintage), the menu will include local goat's cheese and mushroom tart with marinated leeks and hazelnuts; smoked venison carpaccio with fried quail's egg, creamy celeriac salad and beet jelly; salmon and crayfish ravioli with watercress, apple and fennel salad, and sorrel cream; ballottine of braised duck leg with roasted breast, bacon, glazed turnips and medjool date purée; Neudorf's Richmond red sheep's cheese with walnut oatcake and quince compote; and buttermilk panna cotta with passionfruit.

TICKETS Reservations are on a first-in, first-served basis so book early to avoid disappointment. Tickets go on sale from midday, Friday 23 April. Per-head prices include wines. For menus and matching wines see cuisine.co.nz


Manly Pavilion

Darren Simpson (La Sala, Barrenjoey House) has appeared upstairs at Paddington's Light Brigade hotel at La Scala on Jersey. Expect his mod-Italian faves, such as deep-fried dates with pancetta and almonds. lascalaonjersey.com.au


The Corner House

BONDI DOES BOHO

The new Bondi fad for boho eating and drinking spots is growing. Or should that be drinking spots with food? Small, dark and ever-so-slightly dingy haunts, such as Flying Squirrel, Shop and Wine Bar, and The Rum Diaries have competition with the just-opened, slightly larger and smarter The Corner House, on what was once a pretty boring part of Bondi Rd. A wine bar, cocktail lounge and pizza shop are tucked into a series of rooms, on two levels. The light-based, wood-fired pizzas are pretty good, too. Another newbie is Speak Easy, a wine parlour with old couches, huge wine glasses and a simple menu of produce-driven choices such as the charcuterie plate. **thecornerhouse.com.au Speak Easy Bar, 83 Curlewis St**

JOANNA SAVILL

Surfside's up

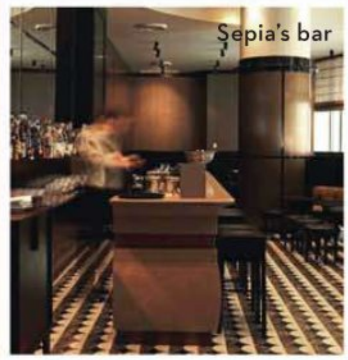
In addition to Bondi's latest joints, Sydneysiders are also flocking surfside in Manly, where there's a flush of new openings. The branch of Hugos already pulls the punters (it's the casual pizza barn co-owned by good-looking Aussie TV chef Pete Evans) but the new Manly Pavilion has serious food cred in the form of young chef Jonathan Barthelmess, formerly of Coast, and 2009 Sydney young chef of the year, James Parry. The menu is contemporary with strong Italian notes (including house-made salumi) and the upper level fit-out has retained the high ceilings – and water views – of the original 1930s bathers' pavilion. (To keep the local penguin population happy, special low lighting and noise-reduction measures have been used – the birds like to come ashore at night to feed their chicks under the pavilion.)

Another sometime TV face, the over-exuberant Miguel Maestre – formerly of Tony Bilson's Number One Wine Bar – is enjoying mostly positive reviews for his purposely kitsch-named El Toro Loco, also in Manly. Best order? Paella and sangria, of course. With enthusiastic yelps from Maestre on the side. **hugos.com.au, manlypavilion.com.au, eltoroloco.com.au** **JOANNA SAVILL**


Bentley Bar

Hills plot thickens

Inner-city suburb Surry Hills never loses its edge. There's the newish Absinthesalon (with 18 takes on the Green Fairy). Then there's the old-is-really-cool-and-new-again Bentley Bar, reopening after an ultra-chic makeover by Melbourne-based designer Pascale Gomes-McNabb. With Nick Hildebrandt's eclectically brilliant wine list – increasingly featuring natural, organic and no-preservative wines – chef Brent Savage's highly original bar food (love his sweet-salty white anchovy dip) never looked so clever. **absinthesalon.com.au, thebentley.com.au** **JOANNA SAVILL**


Sepia's bar

Sepia chef Martin Benn has plucked Glasgow-born Australian Graeme McLaughlin from his senior sous-chef post at Heston Blumenthal's celebrated Fat Duck restaurant in Bray, UK. **sepiarestaurant.com.au** **JANE ADAMS**

TURNING JAPANESE The most frequently used term in Sydney's Japanese dining vocabulary – after sushi and sake, of course – is izakaya. It's the Japanese equivalent of a gastro-pub, a drinkery where the food is good. Following last year's hit launch of Azuma Kushiyaki, a central-city arcade-based den favoured by star chef Tetsuya Wakuda, now there's nearby Mizuya – specialising in sushi, sashimi and kushiyaki (grilled things on skewers). And karaoke, too. Also hitting its straps after a late 2009 opening is Surry Hills' Tokonoma, a class act in caramel timbers, crimson leather and cunning lighting where shochu (sister spirit to sake, only distilled not brewed) is the tipple du jour. It's right next door to its older sibling, Toko, the style-setting sushi, sashimi and Japanese bar-food eatery. **azuma.com.au, mizuya.com.au, toko.com.au** **JOANNA SAVILL**


Mizuya

BENTLEY PHOTOGRAPHY, LUKE BURGESS; MIZUYA PHOTOGRAPHY, CYBERLAB DESIGN

RED HILL TRIUMPH Australian winery restaurants often don't live up to the cash splashed on them – by the owner or the diner – but the new Red Hill home of Port Phillip Estate and Kooyong wines is a rare triumph, from the multi-million-dollar Wood Marsh design with plunging views to the water to the mod-Euro menu from chef Simon West. But winemaker Sandro Mosele is the real star, his elegant Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays sharing the list with other Mornington Peninsula single-estate Pinots and an Old World selection. **portphillipestate.com.au**





MO' MOVIDA One of Melbourne's most beloved institutions has evolved with the birth of Aqui in the heart of the city's legal district. The third instalment in the MoVida story eschews the moodiness of the original tapas bar for a bright, airy feel but has its own distinct culinary aesthetic. Expect a menu more firmly rooted in Spanish rustic tradition, with Catalan paella, Madrid street food (killer fried calamari sandwiches) and share plates from chef Frank Camorra. **movida.com.au**

At Supermaxi, Rita Macali (ex Ladro) is back doing what she always did best: thin-crust pizza, plus smart starters (go the battered cauli), pasta and roast of the day. **305 St Georges Rd, Fitzroy North, ph: 03-9482 2828**



INTO THE NIGHT The ground zero of Australia's coffee capital, South Melbourne's St Ali is taking its mission of bespoke coffee for the masses one step further by opening for dinner and offering coffees matched to the South-East Asian menu devised by Ben Cooper, former head chef at ezard and Melbourne's Longrain. Look out for the kingfish head, grilled and thickly caramelised, finished with a beurre blanc and ponzu. They'd like you to match it with a cold-filtered Syrian bean, served chilled in a Champagne flute, but the Grüner Veltliner will do just as nicely. **stali.com.au**

Palace début He's a global brand these days, but until now Luke Mangan has neglected his home town. That's changed with the opening of The Palace, a rundown South Melbourne workers' pub tarted up for the prodigal son's Melbourne début. Expect a modern gastro-pub menu ranging from classics like steak tartare to an Asian-accented crab omelette in mustard miso broth. His long-term lieutenant at Salt Tokyo, Marjon "MJ" Olguera, is in charge of the kitchen. **palacehotelmelbourne.com.au**



THE FRAME GAME

A curious new term just entered the Melbourne accommodation lexicon: "art hotel". The Deague family has committed half a billion dollars to creating a series of hotels dedicated to, and decorated by, leading Australian artists. The second to open is The Olsen, the 229-room development in South Yarra featuring 492 works by landscape artist John Olsen, including his six-metre mural *The Yellow Sun and the Yarra*. It's guests only, for now, at the seafood-focused BlueBottle. But a 120-seat steakhouse, Steer Bar and Grill, featuring a Brazilian-style charcoal grill, will open soon. **artserieshotels.com.au**

LARISSA DUBECKI


Last year we paid out more in life insurance claims than any other NZ provider.
It's a claim we're proud of.

quest for perfection

Josh Emett – star NZ chef and Gordon Ramsay protégé – talks to **Sarah Nicholson** about starvation, sleep deprivation and ambition



Maze dining room
right: Josh Emett

Josh Emett's recounting of his meteoric rise through the ranks of Gordon Ramsay's empire – bringing him to head up the Australasian début – has elements of his boss's own story: raw ambition, a drive for perfection and, predictably, gruelling conditions.

Emett, 36, remembers an "idyllic childhood" on a farm near Hamilton, where his mother encouraged him in the kitchen. "Even from a really young age we were allowed to bake and make a mess," he recalls.

He studied at Waikato Polytechnic and, after spells in New Zealand restaurants, moved to Melbourne in 1997 to work under Donovan Cooke at the acclaimed est est est. He was 26, and about to head to the UK, when he reached a turning point: overnight he decided to become serious about his career. "I just put my head down," he says.

It didn't get more serious than London's Restaurant Gordon Ramsay and, after a stint on yachts in France, he made a call. "It was the toughest kitchen in England at the time," says Emett, "but that was the last thing on my mind." He was focused and driven. "I walked into Gordon's kitchen and said I'd take whatever. I didn't ask about money or position. I just got in there and hammered it," he says. "Anyone or anything that got in my way..."

Working in this gruelling environment, often from 6am to 1.30am, five days a week, took its toll. "I wasn't eating; I was literally skin and bone," he says. Despite that, he was "happy and comfortable" and relished the steep learning curve. "As brutal as it was, it was always about the food, operation and cleanliness," he says. "It's not a whole lot of guys standing around shouting for no reason – we're hell bent on getting things right every day."

And so began Emett's rapid career ascent, with a move to open Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's under head chef Mark Sargeant, followed by the role of head chef at the opening of The Savoy Grill in 2003.

"Marcus Wareing oversaw that project with me, so it was his name on the door, but I designed the kitchen, the menu and employed all the staff," says Emett. "A 28-year-old Kiwi with his name on the door of The Savoy? It was not really realistic and I understood that at the time."

For two years he was "very stressed out, very angry" in his search for perfection. "I was finding my way to get people to do what I wanted quickly, without shouting." The restaurant was awarded a coveted Michelin star in 2004.

Emett was also at the eye of the storm when Ramsay made his much-hyped foray into the US in 2006 with Gordon Ramsay at The London NYC. Vindication from early mixed reviews came with two Michelin stars. Emett also oversaw Maze there and Ramsay's West Hollywood restaurant, which also garnered a star.

Now at Maze and Maze Grill in Melbourne's swish new Crown Metropol, he again has his work cut out: with 260 restaurant seats, as well as breakfast service and in-room dining for the 658-room hotel, Emett thinks his 50 chefs can do 800 to 1000 covers per day.

Steak specialist Maze Grill has a private room where diners order wine, then food is matched accordingly. The adjoining Maze offers a grazing menu of small plates that are "very refined and delicate with interesting flavours". London signatures include ox "tongue and cheek" with caper and raisin purée and horseradish potatoes.

Part of the attraction of Melbourne is being closer to home, so he can reconnect, says Emett, who has brought his English partner, Helen, and baby son, Finlay, with him. "I always envisaged going away for a time, then bringing back what I've learnt to New Zealand. It's something I've been looking forward to doing for a very long time."

● **Maze, Crown Metropol, 8 Whiteman St, Southbank, Melbourne, ph: 03-9292 8300, gordonramsay.com/australianrestaurants**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK ROPER


"I walked into Gordon's kitchen
and said I'd take whatever. I didn't
ask about money or position"





This page: Te Awa Winery and Vineyards; left: Ant Mackenzie

Par for the brand

Besides owning a pair of premium New Zealand wineries, Dry River and Te Awa, US millionaire philanthropist Julian Robertson has developed the acclaimed Cape Kidnappers and Kauri Cliffs golf courses. The group's new wine brand might be described as a whole in two – Kidnapper Cliffs.

"It's a range made in collaboration with Neil McCallum of Dry River," says Ant Mackenzie, Te Awa general manager and chief winemaker (ex-Mud House and Spy Valley). "The wines are made from defined blocks within the Te Awa vineyard, focusing on varietal purity and clear, concentrated fruit expression – the Dry River ethos. And I have to say, they have been fun to make."

Dry River and Te Awa will continue as always. The first Kidnapper Cliffs wines will be released in June. **JOHN SAKER**

"Chardonnay is one of the most bastardised varieties on the planet. It makes one of the most brilliant wines when treated with respect. But when it is bulked out and mass-produced from a factory, you get a bland, often unpleasant drink"

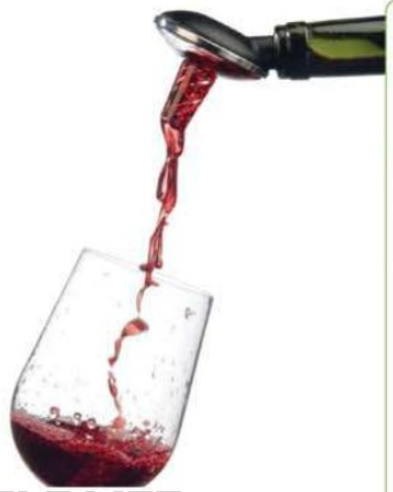
Winemaker James Healy at the launch of his far-from-bland, flinty Dog Point Chardonnay 2008

SOUTHERN CROSS After eight years as senior winemaker at Marlborough's Wither Hills, Nadine Cross is moving south to become winemaker at Central Otago's Peregrine in June. She replaces Pete Bartle, who in turn replaces Carol Bunn at contract winery VinPro. It's something of a homecoming for Nadine, raised on a farm near Dunedin. She's looking forward to working with a smaller crush and getting to know Peregrine's newly planted Bendigo sites. She also relishes the thought of a quieter winter – "a lot less Sauvignon Blanc bottling and getting the job just in time for an early-bird ski pass". **JOHN SAKER**



SITE SEEN Hot on the heels of the new Dida's Foodstore in Takapuna, wine retailer Glengarry is opening a Dida's wine café and deli at its flagship Victoria Park store. You'll be able to select any bottle of wine from the shop and have it served in the café (for a small fee) to go with your tapas. Or choose from the constantly changing by-the-glass wine list. At the time of writing, it was due to open late April.
Cnr Sale & Wellesley Sts, Auckland City **REBECCA GIBB**

TE AWA & ANT MACKENZIE, RICHARD BRIMER; NADINE CROSS, JIM TANNOCK



SHELF LIFE

THE SPIN ZONE

The Danish have put a new twist on moving wine from bottle to glass with the innovative SpinWine, a small pouring device with a special spiral chamber through which the wine passes. The effect is similar to that obtained by decanting the wine.

$49.95 at vintwist.co.nz JOHN SAKER



Hong Kong flow

Hong Kong-born Johnny Leung came here 13 years ago, studied winemaking and now promotes Kiwi wine through his New Zealand Vineyards wine shop at Causeway Bay on Hong Kong Island. The name sums up its specialist niche. Among its Kiwi labels is Twilight Vineyards in Clevedon, where Johnny makes fruitier, sweeter, low-alcohol wines to cater to Hong Kong palates. "The retail competition in Hong Kong is fierce, but people love New Zealand wine. It hasn't been readily available until now." **JOHN SAKER**

THE FERMENT

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE POIZAT of Auckland wine and food importer Maison Vauron is to be honoured by the République Française for his promotion of the nation's epicurean treasures. He is in line to receive *L'Ordre du Mérite Agricole* (popularly called *le poireau* or the leek) from the French Ambassador.

Craggy Range wine director, **STEVE SMITH MW**, is about to bare his Sol. Ever the accomplished viticulturist, he's chosen a warm, perfect site for it. To celebrate 10 Craggy Range vintages, Steve will conduct a vertical tasting of the accomplished **LE SOL** Syrah (going back to the inaugural 2001) on Fiji's Vomo Island in June. The event will coincide with the release of the 2008 Craggy Range Prestige Collection.

A recent bonfire of seized cannabis plants lit by police in the **MOTUEKA VALLEY** did not have a mellowing effect on local vignerons, fearful that their ripening grapes would be affected by smoke taint. Police agreed the timing of their "joint venture" was unfortunate.

Going fishing... soon. Gimblett Gravels and Hawke's Bay Syrah pioneer **DR ALAN LIMMER**'s escape route to his favourite fishing spots is almost clear. After 28 years he recently sold his iconic Stonecroft Winery, but is contracted to stay involved with the new owners for the next three years.
JOHN SAKER

Anyone doubting the value of older vines should taste Martinborough Pinot pioneer Larry McKenna's new Escarpment single-vineyard releases, especially the suave **Pahi Pinot Noir 2008**. The vines are 27 years old.

quicksmart

Ray McVinnie celebrates the changing of the seasons



RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

At the supermarket you see the obvious types of seasonal produce, but many supermarkets still have produce that reflects a manager's idea of what a produce department should offer rather than what is seasonal. It is the "commodification" of food that occurs when cooking and eating is not the thing that determines the food supply. Because seasonal produce generally has a better flavour – and is often cheaper than imported, out-of-season produce – I would respect and return to any establishment that put up a notice saying something revolutionary like "beans are out of season; the imported variety isn't any good so we didn't buy any!"

Thankfully seasonal produce is available at the many excellent greengrocers that remain – those people who are experienced with produce and go to the market themselves. We also have that other great alternative to mainstream food shops – the many farmers' markets springing up. Not only do you get to celebrate the passage of the year with the food available – and often great value – but also the pleasure of talking to growers and the social aspect that markets have provided for centuries. These markets are always rewarding – I find favourite or interesting varieties of seasonal vegetables that enrich my culinary repertoire and the personal flavour library which everyone who loves to eat inevitably builds up over their life.

Autumn vegetables are really the last of the summer produce and the beginning of what will sustain us through the winter. However, the hopefully still golden days of autumn call for lighter vegetable dishes than we want during the colder months. Here are some ideas.

Roasting the beetroot for this satisfying salad may take a while but the oven does all the work

BEETROOT & BACON SALAD

SERVES 4-6

Roasting beetroot for this satisfying salad may take a while but the oven does all the work. It can serve as a first or main course, or is also good as a side dish with steak or chicken.

4 beetroot, peeled and cut into thin wedges
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
3 handfuls rocket leaves (the spiky wild rocket if available for its peppery flavour)
4 rashers rindless bacon, diced 4cm
200g Greek-style yoghurt
½ cup walnut pieces, toasted

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Put the beetroot into an ovenproof dish, add 4 tablespoons of the oil then season with salt and pepper. Cover and place in the oven for 1 hour or until tender. Remove from the oven, uncover and cool for 5 minutes. Add the vinegar and mix well.

Place the rocket on a serving platter. Fry the bacon in the remaining oil until just crisp.

Scatter the beetroot over the rocket, reserving the oil and vinegar mixture from the beetroot dish. Put small blobs of yoghurt over everything and sprinkle the bacon and toasted walnuts on top.

Drizzle the oil and vinegar mixture from the beetroot over everything.

MUSHROOM PASTA For a delicious first course, brush large **mushrooms** with **olive oil** mixed with a little crushed **garlic** and **black pepper**, and grill or barbecue until tender. Slice the mushrooms in half, saving their juices, and toss with beaten **sour cream**, finely chopped **red onion**, **lemon zest**, chopped **chives** and chopped fried **bacon**, and serve tossed through **fettuccine**.

SLOW-COOKED VEGETABLES I like soft, slow-cooked Italian-style vegetables. Put **broccolini** and **cauliflower** florets into a deep saucepan, add chopped **garlic**, finely diced **preserved lemon peel** and a big glug of **extra virgin olive oil**. Add 2 tablespoons of **water**, **season** well, cover and simmer for 30 minutes until soft. Place on a warm serving platter and add a big squeeze of **lemon**. Sprinkle with chopped roasted **hazelnuts** and serve with panfried free-range **chicken thighs** (make a little gravy with a glass of **white wine** and the pan **juices**), and well-seasoned, boiled chunks of Agria **potatoes** crushed slightly and tossed with pitted **black olives**, **butter** and **parsley**.

ROASTED ONIONS Rub the loose skins off lots of **red onions** and place side by side in a roasting dish. Roast in a 190°C oven for 40 minutes or until tender. Remove from the oven, cut each in half, sprinkle with chopped **prosciutto** and your best **balsamic vinegar** and serve with barbecued **steak** and a **green salad**. >



PANFRIED PRAWNS Panfry raw peeled **prawns** in **extra virgin olive oil** with lots of chopped **garlic**. Add lots of chopped **spinach**, season well and let wilt. Place everything on a warmed platter, add **lemon juice**, crumbled **sheep's feta**, chopped **tomatoes** and **mint**. Serve with crusty bread.

WATERCRESS SALAD Place a generous layer of **watercress** on a big platter topped with crunchy **croûtons**, sliced **radishes**, **capers**, **green olives**, halved still-warm **boiled eggs**, each with a dollop of best-quality bought **aïoli**, **anchovy** fillets and **parsley** sprigs.

FRIED POTATOES Fry leftover boiled **potatoes** cut into bite-sized chunks in **olive oil**, a pinch of **chilli flakes** and chopped **garlic**, toss with chopped **tomatoes** and **basil leaves**, and serve with fried **kingfish fillets**. **Lemon** wedges on the side for squeezing.

SPICY VEGETABLE COUSCOUS Place **cauliflower** florets, **carrot** ribbons, **button mushrooms** and **black olives** on a roasting tray. Toss with **olive oil**, **coriander** and **cumin seeds**, season well and roast until everything is browned and slightly shrivelled. Remove from the oven and serve on **couscous** with **spicy harissa**, roasted **tomatoes** and a dollop of **plain yoghurt**.

SALSA Mix diced **avocado**, **tomatoes**, **coriander** and **red onion** with **extra virgin olive oil** and fresh **lime juice**, **season** well and serve on steamed **long-grain rice** with **well-seasoned** sliced boned **belly pork** that has been baked until crisp and golden in a 180°C oven. **Kaitaia Fire** or your favourite hot sauce on the side.

MOROCCAN CARROTS Boil lots of chopped peeled **carrots**, purée in a food processor, sweeten with **honey**, stir in toasted **cumin seeds** and **season** well. Serve under barbecued **chicken** that has been rubbed with **harissa** and **olive oil**. Warm **flatbread** on the side.

ROASTED BEETROOT Toss halved roasted **baby beetroot** with **lemon juice**, **cream**, **salt**, **black pepper**, chopped **mint** and **capers**, and serve with **roast chicken** and steamed **rice**.

COCONUT KUMARA Roast small **kumara** until tender, split in half, place on a serving platter, and drizzle lots of **coconut cream** and fresh **lime juice** on top. **Season** and sprinkle with chopped **coriander** and serve with **lamb chops**.

FRIED LEEKS Thinly slice plenty of **leeks**, add chopped **garlic** and **lemon zest** then slow-fry in **olive oil** until tender. Add a splash of **white wine** and lots of thawed **frozen peas**. Mix well, **season** and serve sprinkled with **mint** alongside panfried **squid** or **king prawns**.

TURNOVERS With leftover **potatoes**, make small **flaky pastry turnovers** stuffed with boiled **potatoes**, chopped **green olives**, finely diced **preserved lemon peel**, **fried onions** and chopped **dill**. Brush with beaten **egg** and bake until crisp and golden. Serve each with a dollop of well-seasoned **plain unsweetened yoghurt** mixed with squeezed-out grated **cucumber** and chopped **mint**. A first course or good with **lamb** or **chicken**.

WITLOOF SALAD
Put **witloof** leaves in a large salad bowl with chopped hot soft-boiled **eggs**, chopped fried **bacon**, **capers**, **spinach** leaves, sliced **sundried tomatoes**, **white wine vinegar** and **extra virgin olive oil**. Mix well and serve as a first course or with barbecued chicken alongside crusty sourdough bread.

STIR-FRIED CABBAGE & APPLE
Panfry **apple** slices in **olive oil** until golden, add some toasted **fennel seeds**, plenty of thinly sliced **Savoy cabbage** and a splash of **white wine** or **cider**. Stir-fry until the cabbage has wilted but is still crisp, **season** and serve with **garlicky pork chops** and mashed floury **potatoes**.

HOT VEGETABLE SALAD Fry lots of **onions** with chopped **garlic**. Add plenty of sliced boiled **carrots**, chunks of boiled **potatoes**, **wild oregano** and toasted **pine nuts**, mix well and fry until everything is hot and the potatoes are browned. Remove from the heat, add some **wine vinegar** and serve with **goat's feta** and warm **flatbread**.

EGGPLANT BAKE Enjoy the last of the **eggplants** – thinly slice them, brush with **olive oil** then place on a baking sheet side by side and roast until golden on each side in a hot oven. Place in an ovenproof dish with thinly sliced **buffalo mozzarella** or **provolone cheese**, just cover with good-quality **tomato pasta sauce** and a good sprinkle of **Italian parmesan**. Bake until bubbling and serve with green salad.



FENNEL & LEEK WITH SEAFOOD Place thickly sliced **fennel** and **leeks** into an oven dish. Add finely chopped **garlic**, **lemon zest** and **juice**, and a splash of **dry vermouth** or **white wine** then **cream** to just cover. **Season**, cover and bake at 200°C for about 40 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Serve with steamed **scallops** or a steamed small whole **white fish** or **fish fillets**, a drizzle of **extra virgin olive oil** and **parsley sprigs**.

PANELLE WITH SPICY PUMPKIN STEW

SERVES 4-6

This dish is cheap and delicious. Like any simple dish, it relies on good cooking. Panelle are chickpea fritters, a popular street food in Sicily. The first time you make them may not be quick, but whenever you next make them, not only will you get faster, but it will definitely be considered smart. Everyone I serve this to loves the crunchy outside and creamy centres of the panelle. This recipe is based on the one from *Cucina Siciliana* by Clarissa Hyman.

Note you need to beat the chickpea flour into the water very quickly to avoid lumps.

600ml water
200g sifted chickpea flour
3 tablespoons coarsely chopped parsley
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for frying
1 tablespoon toasted cumin seeds
pinch of chilli flakes
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger
zest of 1 lemon
¼ cup currants
900g peeled and seeded pumpkin, diced 4cm
250ml vegetable stock
200g crumbled feta
chopped coriander for serving

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Bring the water to the boil and quickly whisk in the chickpea flour, making sure there are no lumps. Change to a wooden spoon and bring back to the boil, stirring constantly.

Add the parsley, season and mix well. Simmer for 4 minutes until the mixture is like thick porridge; it will leave the sides of the saucepan when stirred. Pour the mixture on to a lightly oiled surface and spread out with a spatula to about 1cm thick. Cool completely then cut into triangles about 15cm long. Reserve.

Place the remaining ingredients except the feta and coriander in an ovenproof casserole. Bring to the boil, cover and place in the oven for 45 minutes. Remove from the oven, uncover and allow to cool while you fry the panelle.

Fry the panelle in 1cm-deep hot oil in batches until well browned and crisp on both sides, turning them with a fish slice. Drain on paper towels.

Serve the pumpkin with crumbled feta and coriander sprinkled on top and panelle alongside.

Credits: iittala Teema plate and Sophie Conran dinner plate from The Studio of Tableware; Tony Sly plate from Cranfields. For full details, see Credits Index.



irregular service

With sommeliers, are our glasses half empty, asks Ralph Kyte-Powell



As an Australian, going out for a meal with a couple of New Zealand winemakers can be gruelling. First, there's the language problem. Then there's the legendary Kiwi capacity for the demon drink.

Australians' abstemious nature leaves us prone to overindulgence when our trans-Tasman neighbours force us to join them in a glass. We can make fools of ourselves. Hard to believe, I know.

This lunch was a trial – the sort sober Australian blokes dread. We sat down in one of Melbourne's dining icons. Now, the way to get a drink at a restaurant is by negotiating with a "sommelier", on this day a handsome spokesmodel in a well-tailored suit.

My guests wanted to try local wines. Talk turned to the austere, minerally dry Rieslings of South Australia's Clare and Eden Valleys. And for a red I suggested an elegant, lighter type of Shiraz to show that not all Australian Shiraz is made in super-hero blockbuster style. The spokesmodel said to leave it to him.

A Riesling arrived. It was sweet – the antithesis of the bone-dry drop we were looking for. His red suggestion was a Barossa Valley Grenache blend – big, sweet, soupy, rugged and alcoholic. Did he know anything about wine?

Once, things were simple. You were given the wine list and you made your choice. The wine waiter, if there was one, but usually one of the waiters, opened the bottle, gave you a drop to try, then poured. Now a sommelier gets your wine, often offering guidance whether you need it or not.

So what is a sommelier? According to Sommeliers Australia, "a trained and knowledgeable wine professional who specialises in all aspects of beverage service". This organisation and similar groups worldwide seek to upgrade standards of wine service and establish career paths in the hospitality industry. For example, the London-based Court of Master Sommeliers, represented in New Zealand by Cameron Douglas, who lectures expertly on the subject at the Auckland University of Technology.

Is there anything wrong with this sort of specialisation? Nothing at all, if the specialist is expert. An acquaintance of mine named Terry tells a story of an outstanding sommelier. He didn't intrude or show the matey familiarity some do. Instead he was polite and pleasant, asking whether an apéritif was required. Terry asked for a recommendation. The sommelier suggested a wine Terry had enjoyed there months before. It turned out the sommelier remembered every wine Terry had ordered on his previous visit. He was good.

Later, the sommelier suggested wines to match their dishes, explaining briefly why. Terry made a selection. When he brought the wine, the sommelier asked whether Terry wanted it decanted. Terry asked his opinion. "I would suggest decanting at the last minute," he said. "It's a delicate old wine and it should get enough air in the glass. With long decanting it may lose fragrance."

This deft, knowledgeable sommelier added something special to the dinner.

This sommelier was one of the best, but is this sort of specialisation always a good thing? All the guff one used to read about wine years ago was intended to demystify it, make it more accessible, more democratic. Wine education was about ditching pretentions, embracing wine with gusto as part of everyday life. Of course, it all went a bit far – there are classic combinations and no-nos you ignore at your peril, as anybody who has had red wine with lobster will affirm.

Where once we had wine waiters who got you what you wanted, now we often have sommeliers who get you what they want you to have. It all goes hand in hand with a new prescriptive view of food and wine matching.

The sommelier associations have the potential to change the wine market. They easily become a vehicle for people with their own business agendas and tend to sell a single view of wine that encourages a sameness of opinion among their members and a sameness of selections on wine lists.

All the guff one used to read about wine years ago was intended to demystify it, make it more accessible, more democratic

The advent of the sommelier in Australia has come with some new articles of faith that aren't necessarily in the interests of customers, staff, or the wine industry.

It is easy to be persuaded that these "commandments" seem to be: 1. big-maker wines are bad, small-maker wines good; 2. obscure grape varieties are good, mainstream varieties are bad; 3. Old World wines are good, "New World" wines bad.

Rather than simply promoting better wine knowledge and wine service, there's a real danger of a blinkered, new-wave form of wine snobbery that ignores the quality in the bottle.

Back at the Melbourne restaurant with my Kiwi friends, we rejected the wines our spokesmodel suggested and chose what we wanted, albeit from a wine list that had precious little we wanted to drink. The spokesmodel sulked in a corner, affronted by such philistines. We had a great time.

ILLUSTRATION BY DARON PARTON

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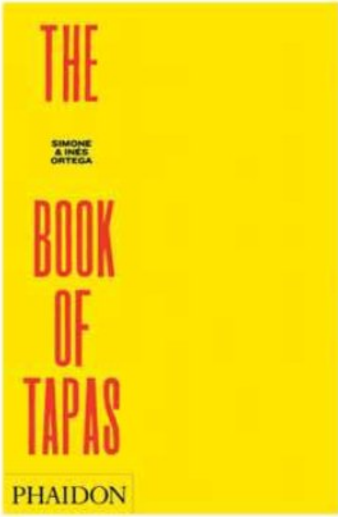
Of course, meat as good as this deserves to be cooked well, whether in your kitchen or throwing it on your BBQ. No worries, it's easy. Just read these tips right here.

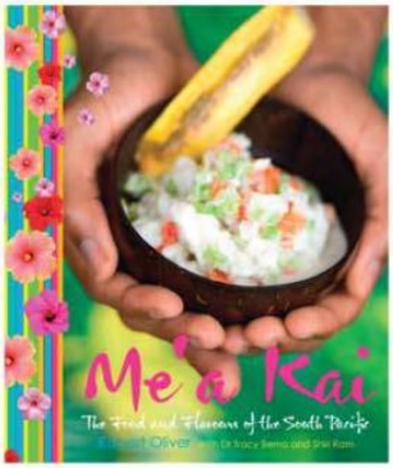
Cooking and BBQ tips

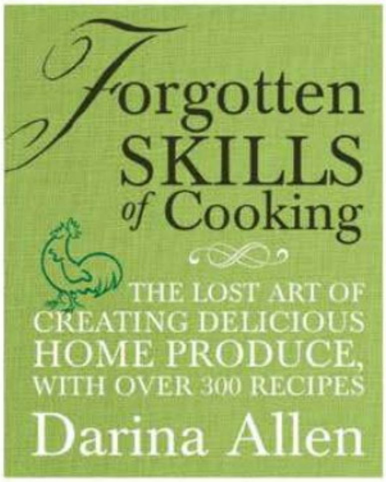
- *Be patient. Cover and rest your venison at room temperature for 15–20 minutes prior to cooking.*
- *Ensure the barbeque is hot before you cook. The meat should sizzle as it makes contact with the plate or grill.*
- *Coat your red meat in oil instead of adding oil to the BBQ grill or hot plate.*
- *Try to cook below the desired degree of rareness as cooking will continue after you remove your meat from the heat.*
- *Let the meat rest after cooking, for at least 5 minutes, so it has time to reabsorb its juices and get extra tender.*

So if this little ramble hasn't convinced you you'll love it, there's only one thing for it. Grab yourself a pack from your supermarket and try it. You'll soon know what all the fuss is about.











THE BOOK OF TAPAS

Simone and Inés Ortega, Phaidon, $65, h/b

This collection comes from the mother and daughter team already revered for *1080 Recipes* – a staple found in many a Spanish household (and recently translated into English). It is a compelling book, well timed for our current fascination with tapas. Now, if we can't afford the fare to Barcelona, we can at least make them at home.

From the ridiculously simple but delicious hard-boiled eggs and black olives to pork-stuffed cuttlefish, most of these are traditional dishes, although there are modern recipes from Spanish chefs around the world, including Frank Camorra of Melbourne tapas bar MoVida.

GINNY GRANT

FORGOTTEN SKILLS OF COOKING

Darina Allen, Kyle Cathie, $79.99, h/b

While teaching at her famous Ballymaloe cooking school in Ireland, Darina Allen noticed her students increasingly seemed to have lost key traditional cookery skills. One such student was about to throw away overwhipped cream, until Allen showed her how to make butter. Allen began teaching the old techniques, finally collating her knowledge in this book.

And what a book. While there are 300-odd recipes (including many classics: coq au vin, Irish stew, steak and kidney pie...), it is also packed with information, from the very useful charts on the cuts of beef, lamb and pork to the how-to sections on jointing chickens, filleting fish and the importance of using fresh eggs.

However, it is the invaluable smallgoods section that really caught my eye, with its recipes for brining beef and making pastrami, bresaola, salami and chorizo, dry and wet cures for bacon, and, for the offally-minded, recipes for beef heart, tripe, brawn and tongue.

The dairy and egg sections are a joy, with notes on making soft cheeses and on the rearing and dispatching of chickens. For a smallholder or those interested in self-sufficiency this comprehensive tome is a must.

GINNY GRANT

ME'A KAI: THE FOOD AND FLAVOURS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Robert Oliver (with Dr Tracy Berno & Shiri Ram), Godwit, $75, h/b

This may well be destined to be a coffee table book, with its photos of clear water, coconut palms and beautiful people, but it is more than that.

This cookbook has separate sections for each of the island nations, including one on Indo-Fijian cuisine. And it is not just traditional but modern Pacific cuisine that is covered here. Hence, chop suey and reef clams with tomato, chilli and vodka salsa.

The book sets out to identify and celebrate the Pacific's local food cultures, with the aim of encouraging sustainable home-grown foods instead of the imported foods that so predominate now, including in the hotel restaurants where most tourists eat. Unsurprisingly, fish recipes take centre stage, as do the fruits we associate with the islands – taro, breadfruit and pawpaw.

GINNY GRANT

THE REAL FOOD COMPANION

Matthew Evans, Murdoch Books, $99.99, h/b

Inevitable comparisons will be made between this paddock-to-plate 575-page sumptuous comfort-food compendium and Stephanie Alexander's classic *The Cook's Companion*. Both are fact-packed and motivational, and both herald a return to the simple pleasures of the table.

Matthew Evans' epicurean epiphany was triggered by a move from the hurly-burly of Sydney restaurant reviewing to a small mixed farm in southern Tasmania, engagingly captured in his TV series *Gourmet Farmer* (also available in New Zealand on DVD). Now he rears and grows his own food, supplemented by wild foraging and barter with other locals.

His low food-mile ethos and passion for all things edible is palpable, inspiring and educational, and well communicated by Alan Benson's delicious photography. Browse his musings on the makings of good cheese, feeding a dough starter and meat marbling, then dive into any of his hearty country kitchen recipes. I guarantee you'll soon be seeking your own real food supply channels, or at least paying more attention to your languishing vegetable patch.

The only obvious omission – ideas for the most prolific of all vegetables, zucchini, apart from as chook food.

JANE ADAMS

200g Regal Salmon Pastrami
8 mini bagels, halved
1/2 cup baby rocket
Lemon wedges

Sauce
1/4 cup finely diced gherkins
2 1/2 tablespoons finely diced capers
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1/2 cup mayonnaise
freshly ground black pepper

Alex's Regal Pastrami Mini Bagels with Gherkin and Caper Sauce

A delicious combination of flavour and texture in just minutes. Serves 4.

1. Prepare the sauce by combining all the ingredients in a bowl. Set aside.
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3. Spread each bagel half thinly with Gherkin and Caper Sauce.
4. Place rocket leaves on each bagel and top with a generous slice of pastrami.
5. Top with more Gherkin and Caper Sauce.
6. Serve on a platter with lemon wedges.



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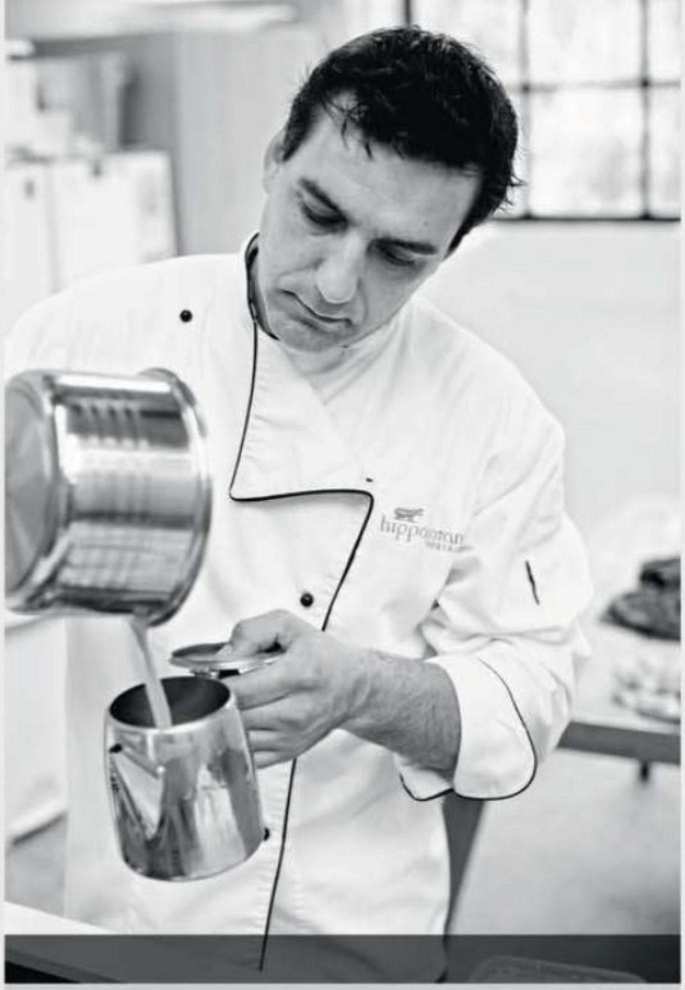
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THE 2009 KAPITI CHEF COLLECTION

SUPREME WINNER

HIPPOPOTAMUS

HEAD CHEF, LAURENT LOUDEAC

This elegantly French-themed restaurant is a firm favourite with locals in the know, but less familiar to Wellington visitors. All that will now surely change as the news of the success of chef Laurent Loudeac spreads.

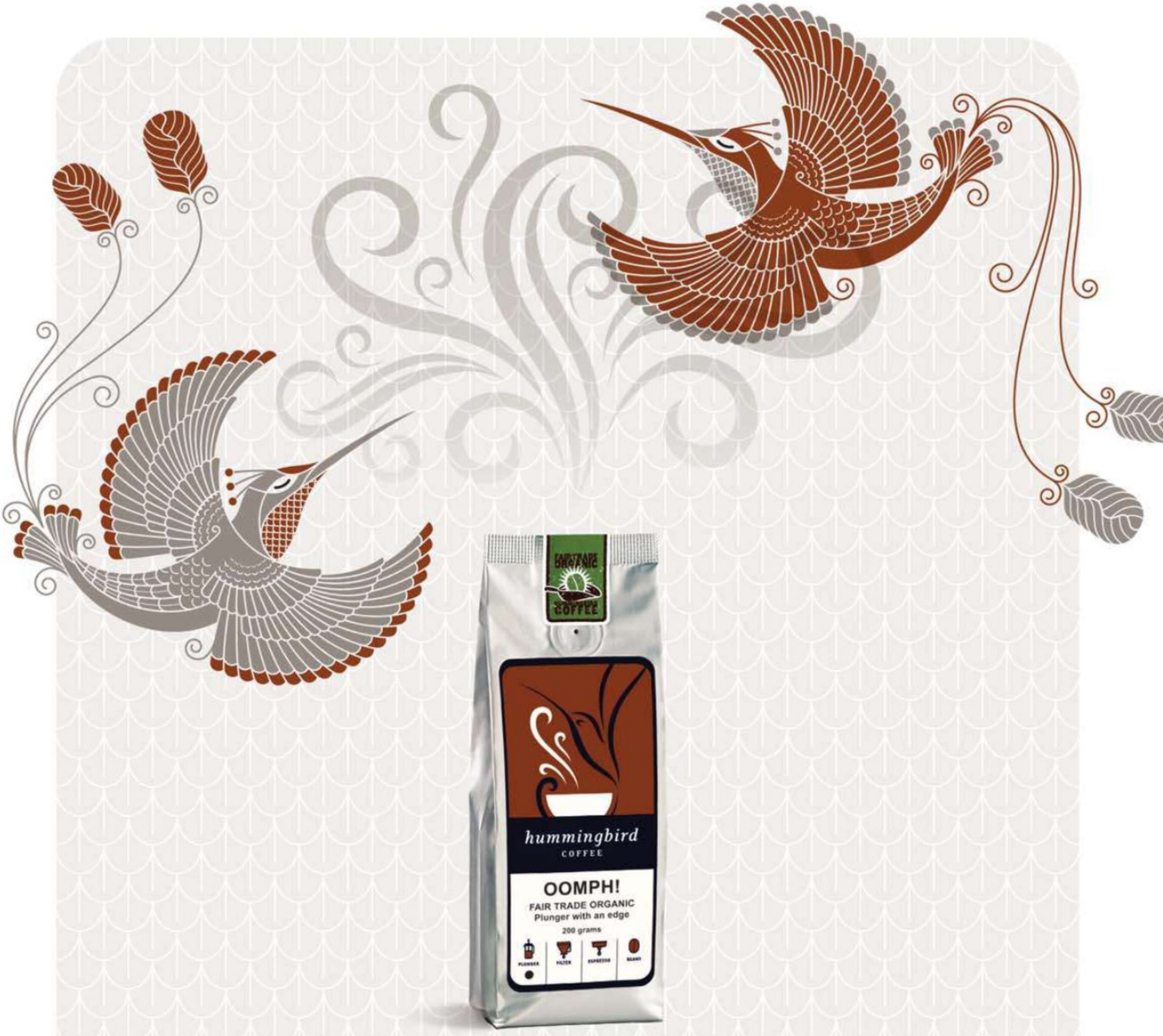
After training in Châteaubriant, France, Laurent worked in top hotels in Switzerland, at the Hilton in London and at Sydney's Level 41.

His cooking style is based on French cuisine using traditional techniques and recipes with a modern twist. Quality is paramount as are local and seasonal ingredients.

Laurent's entry 'Kapiti Kikorangi Tortellini on Creamed Leek with Micro Greens & Parma Ham' was, in the judges' opinion, a perfect combination of tastes and textures; deceptively subtle flavours with expertly executed pasta cheekily showcasing the delicious Kapiti Kikorangi.

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AL BROWN'S GAME RECIPES, PAGE 72

pear essentials

Ray McVinnie is more than happy for things to go pear-shaped



DUCK BRAISED WITH PEARS & SPINACH

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST





ONE OF MY BENCHMARK taste experiences is sharing ripe Beurre Bosc pears, a melting hunk of brie and glasses of sweet wine with close friends at the end of a meal on a warm autumn evening as the last rays of sun streamed through the windows. Pears for me are forever associated with this type of enjoyment.

Apples and pears are not only some of New Zealand's great export earners, but the fruit that are the mainstay for cooks, beginning in autumn and continuing through winter. Despite the apple's biblical associations with temptation, terms like "apple cheeked" and "as American as apple pie" conjure up homely, wholesome images of this plump round fruit. The sinuous elongated shape of a pear is a different thing. While the apple could be likened to the stereotypical virtuous housewife, the pear is the courtesan. Crunching a perfect apple is a tidy, rather jolly experience, quite acceptable in company. But enjoying a perfect buttery pear, with juice that inevitably finds a way to drip down your chin, almost demands a private audience.

The many varieties of pear available don't travel well so are often found rock hard in the supermarket – flavourless objects with skin like paper and the texture of a potato. For eating raw, pears need to be ripened out of the fridge, preferably sitting on a soft cloth to protect their sensitive skins. A perfect raw pear is, however, a taste experience worth waiting for. Hard pears are more forgiving when cooked and many recipes are designed to turn the most steely pears into perfumed yielding delicacies. Like quinces, they turn an appealing shade of mahogany when simmered in syrup – unlike those woolly canned pears. To me canned pears are a travesty.

In these recipes I have specified firm pears, not rock hard but not battered and collapsing, as is the case of many ripe pears found dumped into bins for sale.







DUCK BRAISED WITH PEARS & SPINACH

SERVES 6

Here pear adds its perfume to the bed of vegetables and wine on which the duck legs are slow cooked, giving the dish an aromatic flavour that is just right with a rich meat like duck.

- 6 whole duck legs, bones cut off at the feet ends (to look tidier, but if you don't have a heavy knife or cleaver, leave them on)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger
- 1 cinnamon stick
- zest of 1 orange
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, diced 1cm
- 1 stick celery, thinly sliced
- 150ml dry white wine
- 200ml chicken stock
- salt to taste
- 3 large firm pears, peeled, quartered and cored
- 2 handfuls baby spinach leaves

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Put the duck legs in a bowl and add the oil and pepper. Mix well.

Heat a wide metal casserole over moderate heat and add the duck legs. Fry gently for 15 minutes on the skin side and 5 minutes on the flesh side. They will be browned and the fat will have melted out. Transfer to a plate and reserve.

Pour most of the fat from the casserole (save it to roast potatoes). Place the casserole back on the heat and add the garlic, ginger, cinnamon, orange zest, onion, carrot and celery. Mix well and fry gently for 10 minutes until the onion is soft. Place the duck back in the casserole side by side.

Increase the heat, add the wine and let it bubble for 20 seconds. Add the stock, bring to the boil, taste the liquid and season with salt. Place the pear quarters in between the duck legs. Place in the oven for 45 minutes or until the duck is very tender.

Carefully spoon the duck, pears and vegetables on to a warm serving platter. Skim any fat from the liquid and place the casserole over high heat. Bring to the boil and add the spinach. Mix well and bring back to the boil so the spinach just wilts.

Spoon the spinach and liquid over the duck and pears. Good with rice.

ROASTED PEAR, LEEK, CHICKEN & GOAT'S CHEESE SALAD

SERVES 4-6

Roast chicken salad is always popular. Here the chicken is split in half, opened out and roasted with pears. Creamy goat's feta and a dressing made with the pan juices top it off. This can be a meal for four to six or a first course for six to eight.

- 1 size 14 free-range chicken
- 3 firm pears, cut into quarters
- 2 leeks (white part only), sliced on the diagonal 2cm thick
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds
- ½ teaspoon fennel seeds
- 2 cups bite-sized pieces ciabatta bread
- 2 handfuls watercress sprigs
- 2 handfuls baby cos lettuce leaves
- 100ml red wine vinegar
- 100g creamy goat's feta, crumbled

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Cut the wing tips off the chicken, split it down either side of the backbone and remove (freeze it for making stock). Flatten the chicken out and place in a large roasting dish, skin side up.

Place the pears and leeks around the chicken and brush 4 tablespoons of the oil over everything. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the garlic, mustard and fennel seeds over everything. Roast in the oven for 40-45 minutes until the chicken is cooked and well browned, and the pears and leeks are tender. The acid in the juice from the pears might turn the leeks a little pink, but don't worry about this. Remove from the oven and reserve.

Meanwhile, put the bread into a roasting dish, sprinkle with the remaining oil, season and mix well. Place in the oven for 10 minutes or until the bread is well browned and crisp. Remove from the oven and cool.

Put the watercress, cos and roasted bread on a large platter. Carve the hot chicken and place it on top then the warm pears and leeks around it.

Pour the fat from the roasting dish and place on high heat. Add the vinegar, let it bubble and quickly scrape up the meat juices. Pour this hot dressing over everything. Sprinkle the feta on top.

Roast chicken salad is always popular and here the perfect pairing of creamy feta and sweet pear make it a cut above



ROASTED PEAR, LEEK, CHICKEN & GOAT'S CHEESE SALAD


LEMON RICE PUDDING
WITH SPICED PEARS

LEMON RICE PUDDING WITH SPICED PEARS

SERVES 6

This creamy, lemony rice pudding is based on a Jane Grigson recipe. She says this rich pudding will convince even the most ardent rice pudding hater. It is served warm with peeled pear halves that have been roasted with butter, brown sugar, cardamom and ginger.

Lemon Rice Pudding

- 100g short-grain rice
- 500ml cream
- 500ml milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- zest of 1 lemon
- pinch of salt
- 4 tablespoons caster sugar
- juice of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 150°C. Place everything except the lemon juice into an ovenproof dish. Mix well and place in the oven for 1½ hours or until the pudding is thick and browned and the rice has almost dissolved. Give it a stir several times during cooking. Remove from the oven, stir in the lemon juice and serve with the pears.

Spiced Pears

- 6 firm pears, peeled, halved and cored
- 100g butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon coarsely ground cardamom seeds
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ¾ cup brown sugar

Preheat the oven to 150°C.

Place the pear halves in a roasting dish cored side up.

Mix together the melted butter, cardamom and ginger, and brush all of it over the pears then sprinkle the sugar evenly over.

Place in the oven for 1 hour or until very tender and browned. Remove from the oven and serve with the rice.

PEARS WITH WHITE WINE, VANILLA & FROMAGE À LA CRÈME

SERVES 6

Elizabeth David gives a recipe for fromage à la crème in her book *Summer Cooking* in which she uses a French cream cheese, cream and egg whites. This is my simple version using supermarket cream cheese and cream. The unsweetened, slightly salty richness of the two combined ingredients goes well with the sweet pears and vanilla-scented syrup.

- 200g cream cheese
- 500ml cream, plus extra for serving
- 1 litre water
- 500ml white wine
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise but not all the way
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 6 perfect firm pears with stalks, peeled

Mash the cream cheese with a fork so it softens then beat until smooth. Add the cream and beat until thick but not buttery.

Place the mixture in 6 small individual moulds or small teacups lined with clean cotton cloth or muslin. Shake the mixture down well into the moulds so there are no cavities. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

Put the water, wine, vanilla and sugar in a deep saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Add the pears and bring back to the boil. Simmer for 1 hour or until the pears are very tender but not collapsing.

Carefully remove the pears from the liquid and place in a bowl. Bring the cooking liquid to the boil and boil for about 5 minutes until slightly syrupy and reduced by a third. It will turn an appetising rosé colour.

Remove from the heat, pour the wine syrup over the pears, cool then chill.

To serve, unmould each fromage on to a serving plate, peel off the cloth and place a pear beside each. Spoon a little of the wine syrup over the pears and serve cream separately to pour over the fromage.

The unsweetened, slightly salty richness of cream cheese and cream goes well with the sweet pears and vanilla-scented syrup



PEARS WITH WHITE WINE, VANILLA & FROMAGE À LA CRÈME

PEAR & ALMOND CAKE WITH MASCARPONE & BLACKCURRANT COMPOTE

SERVES 6-8

Pears and almonds are perfect partners. This buttery cake with lots of ground almonds and pear halves baked into it is a good example of the rich combination, with the compote of tart blackcurrants adding another dimension of flavour and texture.

350g caster sugar
250g blackcurrants (frozen are fine)
1 teaspoon lemon juice
4 eggs
125g soft butter, plus extra for buttering the tin
300g finely ground blanched almonds
50g flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 firm pears, peeled, quartered and cored
icing sugar for dusting
250g mascarpone

For the compote, put 200g of the sugar and 2 tablespoons of water into a saucepan with the blackcurrants. Bring to the boil, stirring gently to dissolve the sugar. Add the lemon juice, simmer for 2 minutes then remove from the heat. Set aside to cool.

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Butter the bottom of a 25cm-diameter loose-bottomed cake tin and line the base with baking paper.

Beat the eggs and the remaining 150g of the sugar for about 5 minutes until very thick and pale then beat in the butter.

Fold in the almonds, flour and baking powder. Pour the mixture into the tin and place the pear quarters, rounded side up, in a neat ring on top of the mixture. Push them down a little so they are half submerged.

Place in the oven and bake for 35-40 minutes or until a skewer pushed into the cake part comes out clean and the pears are tender.

Remove from the oven and cool to warm or room temperature. Dust with icing sugar and serve in wedges with blackcurrant compote and some mascarpone. Serves 6-8.

Credits: Rosenthal TAC plate and small platter, Thomas Loft shallow bowl, Jasper Conran for Wedgwood plate, and Bernardaud Digital plate, all from The Studio of Tableware; white linen from Martha's Fabrics. For full details, see Credits Index.



PEAR & ALMOND CAKE WITH MASCARPONE & BLACKCURRANT COMPOTE

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Vintage Gouda
Meyer Gouda Cheese

NZ FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY CHAMPION NEW CHEESE
Maungatautari Goat Cheese
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Ricotta
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KATHERINE MOWBRAY CHAMPION HOBBYIST CHEESEMAKER
Emilio Festa, Christchurch

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hearts of darkness

Mushrooms, nature's overnight sensations, star in Celia Harvey's magic main courses

MUSHROOMS are a mysterious family – they appear some time in the night in grassy fields or under forest canopies, standing alone or in clusters, only to last a couple of days. The flat field mushroom is the most commonly found variety in New Zealand, but cultivated exotics are now widely available, as are imported pungent dried varieties.

The addition of mushrooms to a dish brings an earthy, meaty flavour, though not too dominant. Little has to be done to prepare them – just a wipe with a damp cloth or brush and a small trim of the stem. They hate being washed, acting like sponges with water. Highly perishable, they should be stored unwashed in a brown paper bag.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY CELIA HARVEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



AUTUMNAL SALAD WITH RAW MUSHROOMS & HAZELNUTS
recipe page 68



Aromatic and smoky, this beef daube has the distinctive flavour of shiitake mushrooms, which are available fresh and dried

PEPPERY BEEF & SHIITAKE MUSHROOM DAUBE

SERVES 4-6

This slowly braised rich beef stew can be done in a crockpot. Aromatic and smoky, it has the distinctive flavour of shiitake mushrooms, which are available fresh and dried. Their caps are firm and retain their shape even when cooked for a long time. I discard the stalks as they are too chewy for this dish. For best results, start this dish a day ahead.

1kg blade steak
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
2 carrots, cut into thick batons
4 cloves garlic, crushed to a paste
1 bottle (750ml) dry red wine
1 whole star anise
2 fresh bay leaves
zest of ½ orange
40g butter
2 tablespoons light olive oil
4 tablespoons flour
100g fresh shiitake mushrooms, stalks discarded, and thickly sliced
salt to taste
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
1 cup beef stock

Trim the steak of any sinew or thick fat and cut into 2cm-3cm cubes. Place in a bowl with the onions, carrots and garlic, and pour in the wine. Add the star anise, bay leaves and orange zest, and leave to marinate overnight, or for at least 4 hours.

Drain the meat, reserving the marinade, and pat dry with paper towels. Heat the butter and oil in a heavy saucepan then brown the meat in batches without crowding the pan. Remove as it browns and set aside.

Add the onions and carrots to the pan. Fry for 4-5 minutes then sprinkle the flour over and cook until it browns. Increase the heat and slowly pour in the reserved marinade, stirring continuously and scraping up the meaty bits on the bottom of the pan.

Return the meat to the pan and add the sliced shiitake. Season with salt and the pepper.

Bring to the boil, skim the surface then add the stock. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 2½-3 hours until the meat is tender and the sauce is thick and dark. During cooking check occasionally and skim off any foam or fat.

Remove the bay leaves and star anise then serve the daube over tarragon mash, mashed swede or soft polenta (see page 70).

If preparing in a crockpot or slow cooker there is no need to sear the meat; just toss it lightly with flour and place everything in the pot.

SWISS BROWN CAPS WITH WALNUTS & BLUE CHEESE ON TAGLIATELLE

SERVES 4-6

This pasta sauce would have to be one of my all-time favourites. Cream is the best medium to carry blue cheese and nuts, though for a less rich dish you could omit the cream and just toss knobs of the cheese through.

Swiss brown caps are from the same family as white buttons but a different strain and with a more robust flavour. They are available all year round.



SWISS BROWN CAPS WITH WALNUTS
& BLUE CHEESE ON TAGLIATELLE

200g Swiss brown cap mushrooms
1 clove garlic
salt and freshly ground black pepper
50g butter
2 fresh sage leaves, finely sliced
250ml cream
100g walnut pieces, chopped, plus extra to serve
500g fresh tagliatelle
olive oil for tossing
100g crumbly blue cheese
freshly grated parmesan to serve (around 50g)

Brush the mushrooms with a damp cloth and cut into slices around 5mm thick. Crush the garlic and some salt to a paste with the side of a knife.

Melt the butter gently in a large frying pan and add the garlic and sage. Fry until sizzling and golden.

Add the mushrooms and toss to coat with the garlicky butter. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce the heat, pour in the cream and add the walnuts (they will infuse the cream with a lovely rich flavour). Stir together and leave to simmer and reduce by a third (about 10 minutes).

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and add a generous amount of salt. Add the pasta, stir until it comes back to the boil and cook until al dente. Drain, return to the pan and toss with some olive oil and pepper.

Crumble knobs of the blue cheese through the simmering cream and remove from the heat just as the cheese starts to melt. Pour over the warm pasta and stir through.

Serve with grated parmesan and extra chopped walnuts.

OYSTER MUSHROOMS, BLACK FUNGI, CHICKEN & RICE STICK NOODLES

SERVES 4

A beautiful blueish shade of silver and with a fluted shape, oyster mushrooms are very elegant. Creamy textured and delicate, they do not like to be cooked long. They should be added last so they hold their texture and don't become rubbery.

The dried black fungi (also known as wood ear or cloud ear) require soaking in hot water for 30 minutes and slicing, and add an interesting crunchy texture to this dish. You will need to make a trip to an Asian grocery store for the ingredients for this dish.

For the sauce

4 tablespoons Chinese black vinegar
75g Chinese sesame paste
2 tablespoons caster sugar
4 tablespoons sesame oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
I small red chilli (or ½ teaspoon chilli paste), finely chopped
3 tablespoons sesame seeds
100ml light soy sauce

For the chicken and mushrooms

10g dried black fungi
100g oyster mushrooms
4 small skinned and boned chicken breasts (around 600g)
soy sauce for poaching
chilli oil for poaching (optional)
½ teaspoon sesame oil
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
4 spring onions, cut into long ribbons
250g rice stick noodles
few handfuls water spinach, stems trimmed and leaves coarsely sliced

For the sauce, place all the ingredients in a bowl with ¼ cup of water and whisk until smooth. Set aside.

Place the dried black fungi in boiling water and soak for 30 minutes then remove from the water when pliable, reserving the water.

Cut off the stems and discard then slice the fungi with a sharp knife and set aside.

Wipe the oyster mushrooms and trim the stems. Tear them from cap to stem so they retain their natural shape. Set aside.

Place the chicken breasts in a shallow pan, cover with water, add the mushroom soaking water and season with a dash of soy and chilli oil, if using.

Bring to a low simmer and cook gently for 12-15 minutes until the chicken is just tender. Do not let the water boil or the chicken will become tough.

Meanwhile, in a wok or frying pan heat the sesame oil and vegetable oil. Drop in the oyster mushrooms and black fungi. Fry quickly until the oyster mushrooms just start to colour then add the spring onions, mix everything well and take off the heat. Keep warm.

Remove the chicken breasts from the poaching liquor and while still warm shred into long strips.

With the chicken poaching liquid still simmering, add the noodles and stir briskly then allow to simmer for 5 minutes.

Drop in the water spinach and turn over quickly. As soon as the spinach wilts remove and drain quickly.

Place in warmed bowls, top with shredded chicken then the mushroom mixture. Spoon the sauce over and serve immediately.

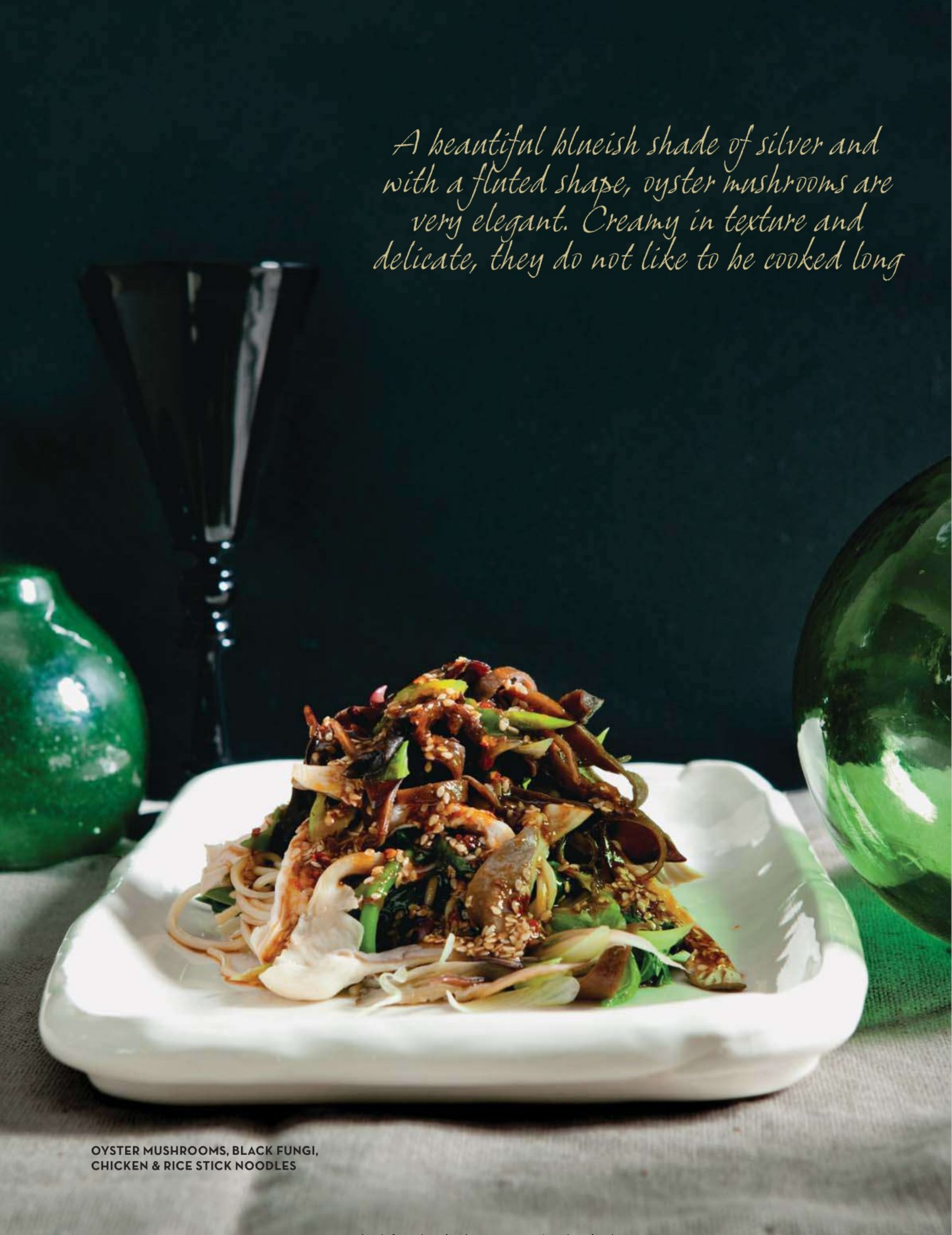
AUTUMNAL SALAD WITH RAW MUSHROOMS & HAZELNUTS

SERVES 4

The beauty of this salad is that the raw mushrooms have a pleasing firmness and full flavour. It is really important to assemble the salad at the last minute to retain all the wonderful rich flavours. Salads are not just for summer – this one is all about autumn.

150g button mushrooms (pick the smallest with tightly closed caps)
2 shallots, thinly sliced
salt and freshly ground black pepper
few sprigs tarragon (if not available use marjoram), leaves torn and stems discarded
50g hazelnuts
75g pancetta, cut into strips
2 teaspoons honey
100ml red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
200ml olive oil
100g baby spinach leaves, thinly sliced
several handfuls radicchio, thinly sliced

Wipe the mushrooms, trim the stems and slice as thinly as possible. Place in a bowl with the shallots and sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Add the tarragon leaves then reserve.



A beautiful blueish shade of silver and with a fluted shape, oyster mushrooms are very elegant. Creamy in texture and delicate, they do not like to be cooked long

OYSTER MUSHROOMS, BLACK FUNGI, CHICKEN & RICE STICK NOODLES



HUNTER-STYLE CHICKEN WITH DRIED PORCINI

This rustic dish always has a base of onions, garlic and tomato. Here, the addition of porcini and their liquor adds a pleasing woodsy flavour

Toast the hazelnuts under a low grill then roll in a tea towel to remove the skins and coarsely chop.

Place the pancetta in a hot pan with no oil and fry until crisp. Drain on a paper towel and set aside.

Whisk the honey, vinegar, mustard and oil together (add 1 teaspoon of water if too thick) then toss some of this dressing with the leaves and nuts. Scatter the pancetta over and pile the mushrooms and shallots on top, and serve drizzled with more dressing.

HUNTER-STYLE CHICKEN WITH DRIED PORCINI

SERVES 4

In Italy, hunter-style chicken – pollo alla cacciatora, or chicken cacciatore as it's known in English – varies from region to region. A simple, rustic dish, it always has a base of onions, garlic and tomato. Here, the addition of rehydrated porcini and their liquor adds a pleasing woodsy flavour. You can also add chopped pancetta to this recipe.

1 medium (size 14) chicken
salt and freshly ground black pepper
olive oil for frying
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
¾ cup red wine
1 tablespoon freshly chopped rosemary
1 tablespoon tomato paste
400g can chopped tomatoes in juice
10g dried porcini, soaked in hot water (see next page)

Joint the chicken by removing the legs at the hip socket and cutting the joint between the leg and thigh then carefully take the breasts off either side of the breastbone and quarter them. Season all the pieces with salt and pepper.

Heat the olive oil in a heavy-based frying pan, preferably with a lid.

Add the chicken pieces, onion and garlic, and sauté until the chicken pieces are golden all over. Pour in the wine, let it bubble then add the rosemary and tomato paste. Simmer for a couple of minutes.

Add the tomatoes and the chopped porcini with their strained liquor. Taste and season with salt and pepper if required. Reduce to a low simmer, cover and simmer for 30 minutes.

Serve on soft polenta (see below).

Soft Polenta

Bring a large saucepan of water to a rolling boil (1 litre per 250g of instant polenta) and add a generous amount of salt. Pour in the polenta in a stream, whisking to stop lumps forming. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 20 minutes, stirring. If it thickens too much add a little warm water and cook longer (it should be like a soft purée). Mix in a knob of butter and handful of grated parmesan.

Credits: Tony Sly dinner plate, pasta bowl and serving platter, Terre Bronze dish, Laguiole salad servers and black pepper grinder, all from Cranfields; hand-blown black goblets from Lukeke Design; antique cutlery, crystal glass and green glass float from Antiques of Epsom; green glass vase and glass decanter from Fly By Night; background painted in Regime from Aalto Colour; linen from Martha's Fabrics; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



Out of the dark

Mushrooms used in this feature

1 SHIITAKE
Bearing a Japanese name, this is a forest mushroom from Asia that grows on wood. They have a strong flavour so you don't need many in most dishes. Their caps are firm and retain their shape even when cooked for a long time, and dried shiitake are a flavourful substitute for fresh. Soak in warm water for 30 minutes.

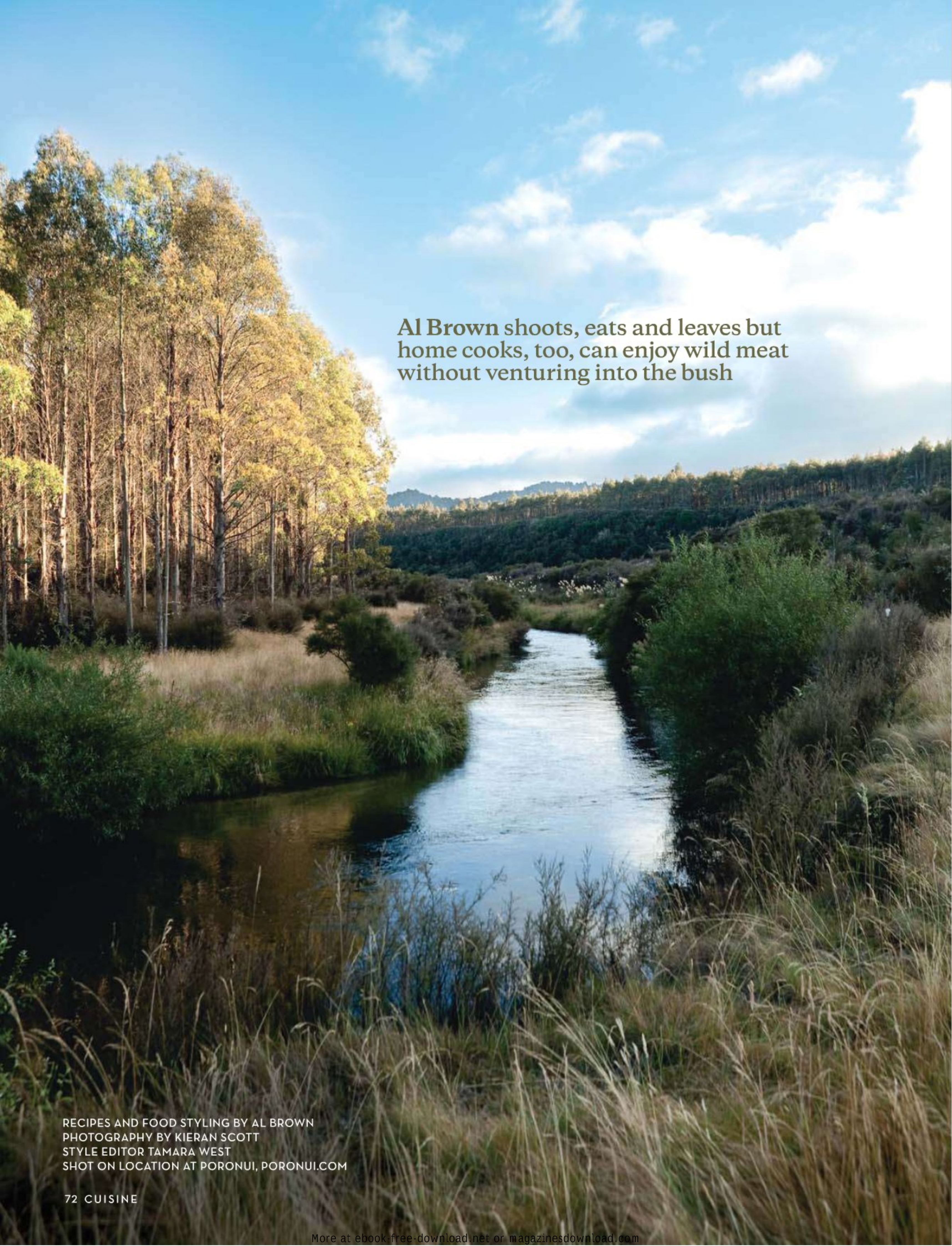
2 BLACK FUNGUS
This irregular, frilly fungus, also known as wood ear or cloud fungus, is usually available in dried flakes and needs to be rehydrated in hot water for at least 30 minutes. It has a mild flavour and a pleasant, crunchy texture for which it is prized in Chinese cuisine.

3 SWISS BROWN CAPS
Also known as brown button mushrooms, Swiss brown caps are from the same family as white button mushrooms (though a different strain) but have a more robust flavour. Pick out the smallest and most tightly closed caps.

4 OYSTER MUSHROOMS
This fan-shaped mushroom can be white to grey and is apparently so called because of its shape as well as faint taste of the sea. They have a mild, delicate flavour and velvety texture, and should not be cooked long.

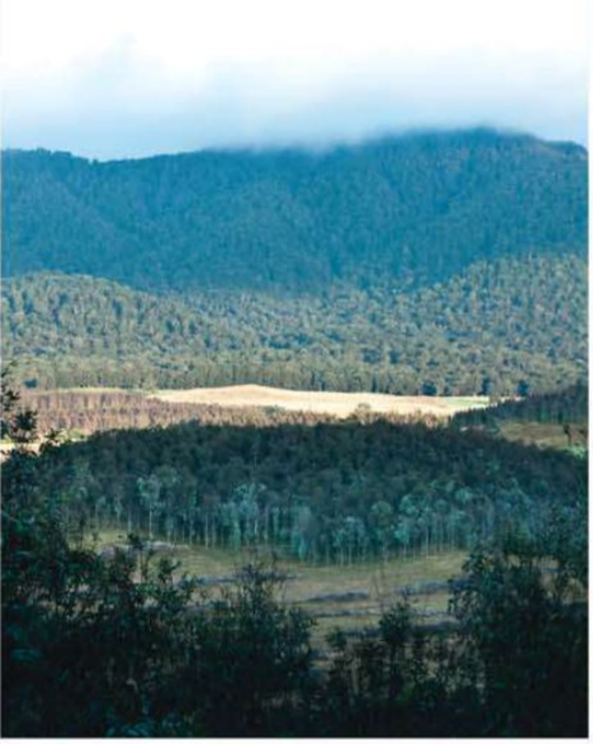
5 DRIED PORCINI
The name porcini means piglet mushrooms in Italian. Known as cèpes in French, these are widely used dried (and widely available) and the addition of a few can liven up a dish of more mild-flavoured mushrooms. Soak dried porcini in hot water and leave to cool, then strain and reserve the water. Pat them dry and check for trapped grit and dirt. They can be sliced or chopped finely and the liquor should be strained through a fine mesh or paper towel into the sauce or dish being prepared.

For stockists see mightymushrooms.co.nz, mytopia-mushrooms.com and meadowmushrooms.co.nz



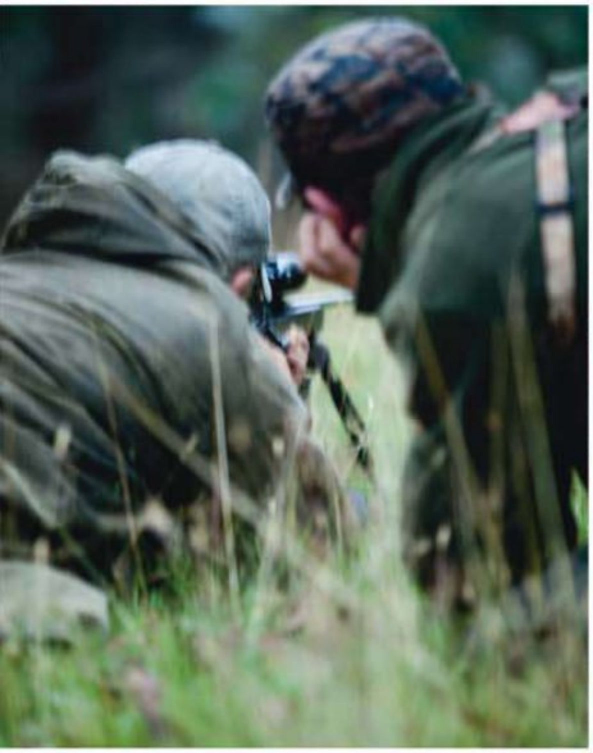
Al Brown shoots, eats and leaves but home cooks, too, can enjoy wild meat without venturing into the bush

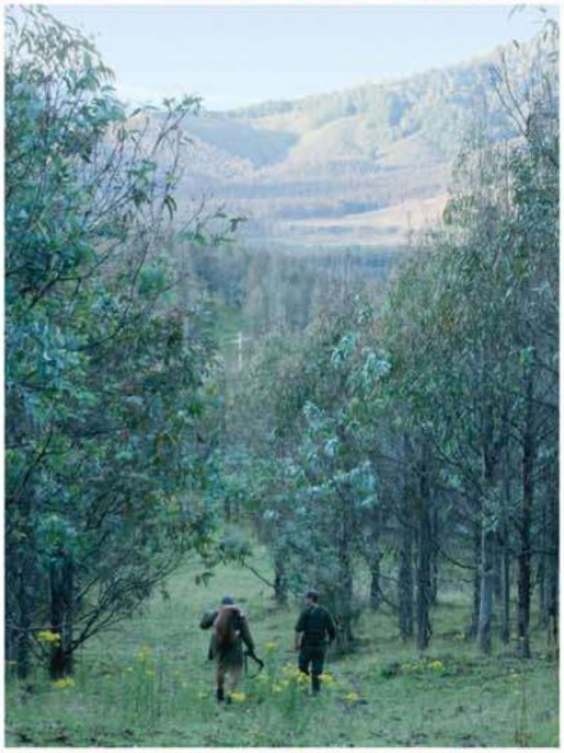
RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY AL BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST
SHOT ON LOCATION AT PORONUI, PORONUI.COM







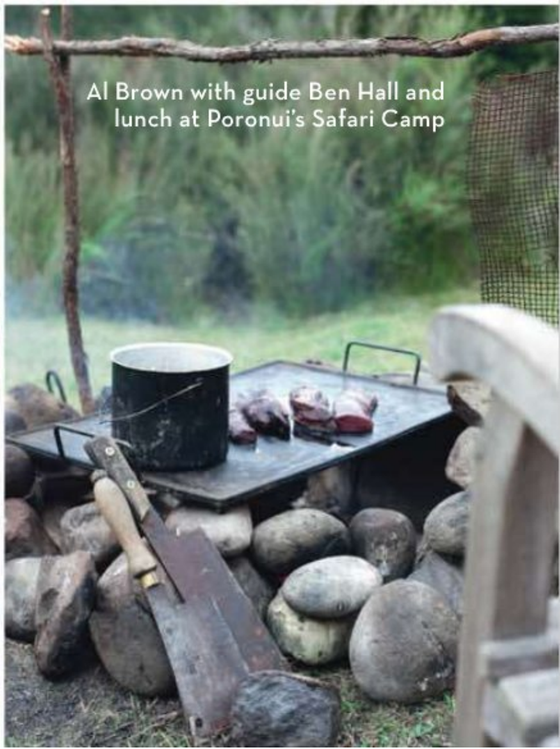










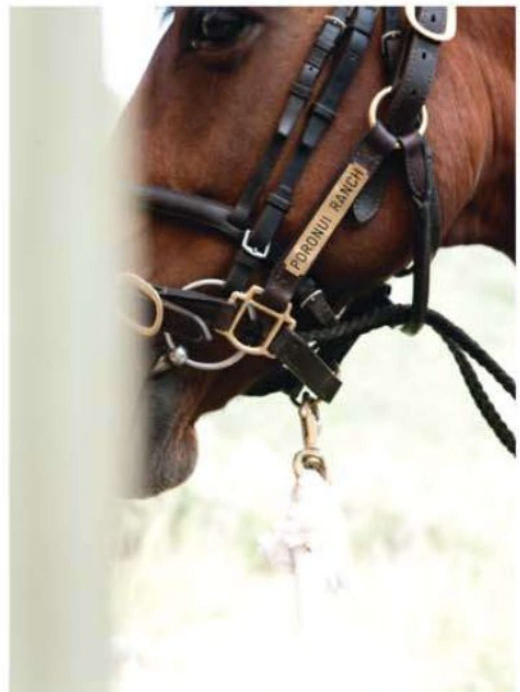


Al Brown with guide Ben Hall and lunch at Poronui's Safari Camp



During my time co-presenting TV show *Hunger for the Wild*, I was lucky not only to visit extraordinary places in this beautiful country, but I also derived much pleasure from meeting many passionate hunters, gatherers and wonderful cooks along the way. I vividly recall a conversation I had once with legendary pig hunter "Baldy" Haitana, up in the backblocks of the Whanganui River. While trying to chase down some wild boar for an episode Steve Logan and I were shooting for the first series, I casually asked Baldy how often he ate wild game. He gazed at me in a slightly perplexed manner as if he hadn't heard the question correctly. After repeating myself, I realised he had heard; however, he was somewhat bewildered by the question.





For Baldy and his whanau, food from the wild is the mainstay of their diet, including boar, venison, eel, trout, watercress and much more. Along with their vegetables grown in the garden, the economic benefits are obvious, not to mention the totally organic intake, which could help explain why Baldy's physique defied his years as he scrambled up and down steep bush-lined ridges like a teenager.

With the current grow-your-own trend sweeping the nation, many can relate to the joys of growing and eating fresh vegetables directly from our gardens. What seems to be missing in this picture is the triumph of providing the protein for the plate as well. New Zealand is a hunter and gatherer's dream, and the opportunities to hunt and cook are second to none. Though now we can also buy game from good suppliers (details page 82).

Over many years I have been fortunate enough to have formed a wonderful relationship with what most would consider the premier hunting and trout-fishing lodge in New Zealand.

Nestled in a spectacular secluded valley in the central North Island, Poronui's formidable reputation is due largely to the down-to-earth staff and guides who live there. It was the ultimate spot to hunt, cook, eat and shoot the photography for this piece.





Top: A cabin at Poronui's Safari Camp; left: inside the lodge at Poronui



HARE FILLET WITH
SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS & PEARS
& APPLE SAGE JELLY

HARE FILLET WITH SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS & PEARS & APPLE SAGE JELLY

SERVES 6 AS AN ENTRÉE

If you like venison, you will love hare – probably the most misunderstood and underused game that roams this country. Its dark red and super-lean meat is not too gamy and is beautifully tender. We've been serving hare fillet at Logan Brown since we opened in 1996, winning over thousands of customers and wowing the converted. This is an elegant entrée or could be a light winter lunch. You can substitute venison fillet or backstrap.

- 6 x hare fillets, silver skin removed
- 2 firm pears
- canola oil for frying
- ¾ cup shallots, finely sliced
- 200g shiitake mushrooms, stems removed then sliced
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup beef demiglaze (I use European Gourmet)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon porcini oil or ½ teaspoon truffle oil
- chervil leaves to garnish (optional)

Take the hare out of the refrigerator 1 hour before cooking to bring to room temperature.

With a sharp knife, cut the pears in half, remove the core and pips with a melon baller or teaspoon then cut the pears into 1cm dice.

Place a non-stick pan on high heat. Once hot, add a little oil then add the pears. Fry on one side for 1-2 minutes until golden then flip to repeat on the other. Remove before they go soft. Reserve.

Return the pan to the heat and add a little more cooking oil then toss in the shallots. Fry for a couple of minutes until starting to turn golden then add the shiitake and thyme. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, reduce the heat and cook for 5-7 minutes until the mushrooms are slightly browned and soft. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

Place a frying pan on medium heat. Season the fillets with sea salt and pepper. Once the pan is hot, add a little oil followed by the hare. Cook for just a couple of minutes each side. They should be no more than medium rare. Remove, keep warm and rest for 3-4 minutes.

While the hare is resting, reheat the mushrooms and place the demiglaze in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Once the mushrooms are hot, add the pears, parsley and porcini oil. Season to taste.

Divide the mushroom and pear mix among the plates. Slice the hare fillets and arrange on top. Drizzle a little demiglaze around then add a few squares of the apple sage jelly (recipe follows). Finish with a few chervil leaves, if using. Serve now!

Apple Sage Jelly

- 2 cups clear apple juice (I use Keri)
- 2 tablespoons tart apple syrup (such as Gusto)
- 12 fresh sage leaves, coarsely chopped
- 2 leaves gelatine

Place all the ingredients except the gelatine in a small saucepan and place on medium heat. Simmer to reduce until you have 1 cupful. Strain off the sage leaves and pour into a bowl to cool slightly.

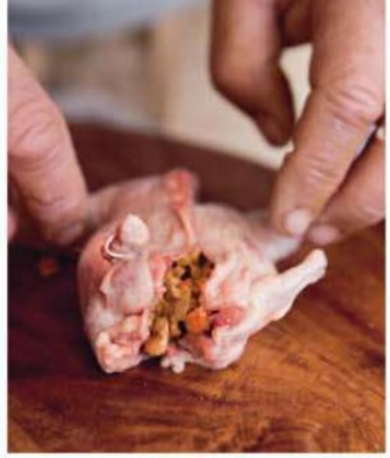
Rip the two gelatine leaves in half and soak in a small bowl of cold water for 5 minutes. Squeeze out excess water before stirring through the hot reduced apple juice.

Pour into a small rectangular dish (about 15cm x 10cm) so the jelly is about 1cm thick. Refrigerate to set. This can be made up to a week ahead.

SPICE-ROASTED QUAIL WITH CARROT & PINE NUT STUFFING & ORANGE COUSCOUS

SERVES 6

You can tunnel-bone the quail or roast them whole. It is a little tricky as these birds are small. But after you've done a couple it gets easier. Eliminating most of the bones before cooking sure makes them eat better. The flavours of this dish are terrific and can easily be adapted to roasted chicken breasts.





Carrot & Pine Nut Stuffing

- ⅓ cup canola oil
- pinch of chilli flakes
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 star anise
- 3 cups finely diced carrot
- 2 cups finely diced onion
- 20g fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tablespoon finely diced fresh garlic
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground cumin
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 cup toasted pine nuts
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place a medium saucepan on medium-low heat. Add the oil, chilli, cinnamon stick and star anise. Fry for a minute then add the carrot, onion, ginger and garlic. Stir well and cook on low until the vegetables are soft (15-20 minutes). Add the spice, cumin, juice, stock and sugar. Simmer until reduced by half.

Remove the cinnamon and star anise. Stir in the pine nuts. Blitz half the mixture with a wand blender or similar to a paste then fold back into the other half. Taste and season. Refrigerate until required.



SPICE-ROASTED QUAIL WITH CARROT & PINE NUT STUFFING & ORANGE COUSCOUS

For the quail

12 quail
1½ tablespoons ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
½ tablespoon ground sweet smoked paprika

To tunnel-bone the quail, take one and with a pair of scissors cut off the wing tips then snip along the backbone. Open the quail out and lie it flat, skin side down, on a chopping board. With clean fingers, remove the breastbone that runs between the two breasts and also remove the wishbone from the top of the breasts. Again with your fingers, peel away the rib and backbones from both sides of the bird.

Gently remove the two main thigh bones by snipping them where they connect to the drumstick. Now repeat with the remaining 11 birds.

In a small bowl mix all the spices until well blended then lightly sprinkle some of the mix all over a quail. Place the quail on a clean surface skin side down. Put about 2 tablespoons of stuffing in the centre. Fold the two sides up and over the stuffing then, with a toothpick, start at one end and sew in and out of the skin until you reach the end.

Repeat with the remaining quail. Refrigerate until required.

Note: If you haven't boned the quail, just place the stuffing in the cavity.

Mint & Cucumber Yoghurt

1 cup natural unsweetened Greek-style yoghurt
1 cup seeded and grated cucumber
⅓ cup finely chopped fresh mint

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and refrigerate until required.

Orange Couscous

¼ cup canola oil
2 cups finely diced onion
grated zest of 1½ oranges
½ cup currants
¾ tablespoon sweet smoked paprika
¾ tablespoon ground cumin
1 cup water
1 cup orange juice
50g butter
400g instant couscous
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place a frying pan on medium heat. Once hot, add the oil then the onion, orange zest, currants, paprika and cumin. Reduce the heat to low and gently sauté, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Remove and reserve.

In a medium saucepan place the water, orange juice and butter. Place on high heat and bring to a rolling boil. Pour in the couscous in a steady stream. Stir once then put a lid on and turn off the heat. Leave for 5 minutes then uncover and fluff up with a fork.

Stir in the orange, onion and currant spice mix. Season to taste. Keep warm.

To cook and serve

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
canola oil for brushing

Preheat the oven to 190°C. Season the quail. Place a roasting dish in the oven for 5 minutes to get really hot. Remove from the oven and brush the dish with a little oil. Put in the quail, breast side up. Drizzle a little oil over. Roast until golden (15-20 minutes). Rest the birds for 5 minutes.

Spoon some warm couscous in the centre of hot plates. Top with a couple of roasted quail and finish with a good dollop of the minted yoghurt. Indian-style chutneys and relishes work well on the side.

VENISON SHORTLOIN WITH CARAMELISED FENNEL LENTILS & BEETROOT, FETA & BASIL RELISH

SERVES 6

If you are ever given some venison shortloin or backstrap from a hunting associate, you can be assured they rate your friendship highly. This delicious cut is considered by most venison connoisseurs as the premier piece from the animal. Lean and tender, it must not be overcooked. I like to serve it just under medium.

This is a robust dish with earthy flavours that suit the slightly gamy attributes of venison.

Beetroot, Feta & Basil Relish

500g baby beetroot, leafy tops trimmed off
⅓ cup canola oil
⅓ cup water
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
4 tablespoons avocado oil
½ bunch basil, torn
50g feta, coarsely crumbled
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the beetroot in a small ovenproof dish and pour the canola oil and water over. Cover with tinfoil and roast for 1 hour or so until the beetroot are soft through. Remove and cool then peel and chop into medium dice.

In a medium bowl place the vinegar and sugar then whisk in the avocado oil. Add the beetroot along with the basil and feta. Stir to combine, season with sea salt and pepper, and reserve at room temperature.

Caramelised Fennel Lentils

⅓ cup canola oil
500g fennel bulb, finely diced (reserve the tender green fronds)
2 cups finely diced onion
1 tablespoon finely diced garlic
½ tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted and finely ground
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
250g Puy or green lentils
4 cups chicken stock
½ cup extra virgin olive oil

Place a frying pan on medium heat. Once hot, add the oil then the fennel, onion and garlic. Reduce the heat to low, add the fennel seeds and fry gently for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the fennel is soft and golden. Season and reserve.

In a medium saucepan place the lentils and chicken stock. Place on the stovetop and bring to a rolling boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook until the lentils have absorbed all the stock and are just soft to the bite (about 30 minutes). If they are still too hard and there is no stock left, add a little water and continue to cook until just soft.



VENISON SHORTLOIN WITH
CARAMELISED FENNEL LENTILS &
BEETROOT, FETA & BASIL RELISH

If you are ever given some venison shortloin or backstrap from a hunting associate, you can be assured they rate your friendship highly

Remove the lentils from the heat. Stir in the fennel and the olive oil. Add the reserved fennel fronds. Season to taste. Keep warm.

For the venison

1.5kg venison shortloin or backstrap
1 cup beef demiglaze (I use European Gourmet; see supplier)
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
canola oil for frying

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Bring the venison to room temperature.

Cut the venison shortloin into two pieces. One half will be thicker than the other so will require a slightly longer cooking time.

Place the demiglaze in a small saucepan over low heat to bring up to a slow simmer.

Season the venison liberally. Place a skillet or similar on high heat and also put a roasting dish in the oven to heat. Once the skillet is hot, add a little oil followed immediately by the venison. Cook for 1-2 minutes on both sides until browned then transfer to the roasting dish along with a little oil.

Finish cooking in the oven for 5-7 minutes. Remove the smaller piece first, leaving the larger one to cook a little longer. Rest the venison in a warm place for 5 minutes.

To serve, spoon some of the fennel lentils on to the centre of 6 warm plates. Slice the venison into 5mm-thick slices and arrange 3 pieces on each plate. Top each with the relish, and pour a little demiglaze on each.

WILD BOAR PIES WITH CREAMED SILVERBEET & HORSERADISH

SERVES 6

Another Logan Brown classic, these show up on the menu in early autumn and remain until the end of winter. For me there is no better pie filling than slow-cooked wild boar shoulder with winter herbs, root vegetables, port and a rich gravy. Riding shotgun with these culinary works of art is the wonderful, but often overlooked, silverbeet with a little cream and horseradish to kick it along.

For the filling

canola oil for frying
150g rindless bacon, coarsely chopped
1 cup diced celery
1 cup diced carrot
2 cups diced onion
2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
2 tablespoons finely chopped thyme
1 tablespoon finely chopped rosemary
1 tablespoon finely chopped sage
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1kg wild boar shoulder, diced
1 cup port
¼ cup apple syrup
1½ litres chicken stock
1 cup beef demiglaze (I use European Gourmet; see supplier)
2 cups quartered button mushrooms
3 cups 1cm-diced kumara
2 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons flour, plus extra for dusting
1 cup peas
800g puff or flaky pastry
2 egg whites, beaten
2 egg yolks, lightly beaten

Place a large saucepan on medium heat. Once hot, add a little canola oil then the bacon. Fry for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden.

Add the celery, carrot, onion, garlic and herbs. Stir through and reduce the heat. Fry gently for 15-20 minutes.

Place a frying pan on high heat. Season the boar. Add a little oil to the pan then brown the meat in batches. Remove and add to the vegetables. Add the port to the pan and scrape up any meaty bits then pour this over the boar and vegetables.

Add the apple syrup, chicken stock, demiglaze and button mushrooms. Bring to a light boil then immediately reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook for 1½ hours, stirring occasionally.

Add the kumara and simmer a further 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and strain the liquid through a colander or similar and reserve.

Take a clean saucepan and add the butter. When melted, add the flour and whisk to make a roux then slowly pour in the cooking liquid, whisking continuously to form a smooth silky gravy. Pour this back over the boar mix, add the peas then





taste and season. Set aside to cool then refrigerate until required.

Dust a clean work surface with liberal amounts of flour. Roll out the pastry to a thickness of 2mm-3mm.

Find a plate or bowl with a diameter of about 12cm and cut out 12 rounds. Heap together the offcuts and roll out again. Place a mound of the boar mix in the centre of 6 rounds, leaving 2cm edges of pastry. Brush the edges with egg white, carefully take the tops and gently place on top of the filling.

Pinch 6 evenly spaced crimps on the top pastry then fold up the base layer and pinch together with the top crimps. Refrigerate until needed.

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the pies on a baking paper-lined oven tray, spaced so they have room to expand. Brush with egg yolk and snip a couple of holes in the top of each pie.

Place in the centre of the oven and cook until golden and flaky (20-25 minutes). Check after 15 and turn the tray for even cooking. Once cooked, remove and let stand for 10 minutes to cool slightly. Meanwhile, heat the creamed silverbeet (recipe follows).

Serve the pies on portions of the hot creamed silverbeet.



For me there is no better pie filling than slowly cooked wild boar shoulder coupled with winter herbs, root vegetables, port and a rich gravy

WILD BOAR PIES WITH CREAMED SILVERBEET & HORSERADISH

Creamed Silverbeet & Horseradish

600g silverbeet, stems and leaves separated
4 tablespoons creamed horseradish (I use Mandys)
1 cup cream
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Finely dice the silverbeet stems and coarsely chop the leaves.

Place 2 tablespoons of water in a large saucepan. Add the silverbeet, cover and place on high heat. Cook for 5-7 minutes until wilted and soft. Pour into a colander and squeeze as much of the water out as possible. Put the silverbeet back in the saucepan and add the horseradish and the cream. Stir and simmer with the lid off for a couple more minutes.

Remove from the heat and blitz with a wand blender or similar. I like to keep it a little chunky and rustic. Season and keep warm until required.

BRAISED RABBIT WITH PAPPARDELLE, OLIVES & PRUNES

SERVES 6

Like many of our feral friends, rabbit is extremely lean. The tender fillets can be cooked quickly, but the best for a whole rabbit is long, slow cooking with stock and vegetables. This dish takes a bit of preparation time, but most can be done a couple of days ahead, leaving just the pasta to be cooked and the rabbit mixed through.

This is a super way to eat rabbit, with the prunes and olives working particularly well together. I find the less salty and more savoury olives work best. Avoid cheap and overly brined varieties. A simple green salad and a loaf of crusty bread would round this meal out perfectly, and of course don't forget the red wine!

2 rabbits (around 500g each)
canola oil for frying
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup white wine
2 carrots, coarsely chopped
2 onions, coarsely chopped
3 sticks celery, coarsely chopped
6 cloves garlic
5 sprigs fresh oregano
5 sprigs fresh thyme
5 cups chicken stock
1 cup beef demiglaze (I use European Gourmet; see supplier)
2 teaspoons butter
2 tablespoons flour

Preheat the oven to 150°C. Cut the legs off each rabbit then chop the two saddles in half. Place a frying pan on high heat and, once hot, add a little oil. Season the rabbit pieces then sear until golden on each side. Place in a roasting dish. Repeat with the remaining pieces then add the wine to the pan, scrape up any meaty bits then pour this over the seared rabbit.

Toss in the carrots, onions, celery, garlic, oregano and thyme. Pour in the stock and the demiglaze. Cover with foil and place in the oven for 2 hours. The rabbit is ready when the meat is very tender and comes off the bone easily. Let cool to room temperature.

Remove all the meat from the bones and coarsely chop. Reserve. Strain the cooking liquid through a sieve. Discard the vegetables and herbs.

Place the butter in a medium saucepan over moderate heat. Once melted add the flour and mix to a paste. Slowly add a little of the cooking liquid at a time, whisking to eliminate lumps. Once all incorporated, bring to a simmer then remove from the heat. Add the meat and mix in. Pour into a bowl and refrigerate until required.

For the olive mixture

⅓ cup olive oil
2 cups finely diced onion
¾ cup finely diced carrot
¾ cup finely diced celery
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
2 tablespoons finely chopped oregano
80g green olives, stones removed then cut in quarters
80g black olives, stones removed then cut in quarters

Place a large frying pan on medium-low heat. Add the olive oil followed by the remaining ingredients. Stir together and gently fry for 30 minutes or so until all the vegetables are soft and fragrant. Pour into a bowl and refrigerate until required.

To serve

1 cup prunes, pitted and chopped
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
500g dried pappardelle
½ cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley
freshly grated parmesan for serving

Place a large saucepan of salted water with a splash of cooking oil on the stove top and bring to a rolling boil. Add the pasta and stir until it comes back to the boil. Cook until al dente.

In another saucepan place the rabbit mix along with the olive mix. Place on medium-low heat and add the prunes. Slowly heat, stirring often.

Strain the pasta and put in a large bowl or on a platter. Taste the rabbit and season then stir in the parsley. Pour over the hot pasta and gently mix through. Serve in warm bowls with a grating of parmesan over each.

ON THE KIWI MENU

Rabbit, hare, deer (red, fallow, rusa, sambar, sika, whitetail, wapiti), **thar, chamois, wallaby, duck** (mallard, paradise, spoonbill), **pheasant, quail, chukka, swan, Canadian geese, pukeko, peacock, goat, boar, turkey**

To check the hunting seasons visit fishandgame.org.nz

ACCREDITED WILD GAME SUPPLIERS

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rarefare.co.nz

The Game Keeper
thegamekeeper.co.nz

Supplier: For stockists of European Gourmet see europeangourmet.co.nz

Credits: Black-handled cutlery and black chambray napkin from French Country Collections; Rockpool dinner plate and low shallow bowl from Nest; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



BRAISED RABBIT WITH PAPPARDELLE, OLIVES & PRUNES

cupboard love

Kathy Snowball works wonders with ingredients that are readily at hand

Some of the best dishes I have created have come from what's available in the pantry and the refrigerator. I like to shop daily, but sometimes it's just not practical and you have to go with what you have got. So I have prepared these dishes, keeping in mind what you might have on hand, or what you might be able to pick up on a quick trip to the local shop. Having a few herbs in the garden or in pots also helps when cooking from the pantry – they add a burst of fresh flavour to most dishes.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY KATHY SNOWBALL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON LOUCAS
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST





PENNE WITH BROCCOLI & CHORIZO recipe page 88



BRAISED CHICKPEAS WITH SNAPPER & HERB YOGHURT

SERVES 4

What would we do without canned tomatoes? They make a base for so many dishes and fill the gap when tomatoes are not in season. Add a can of chickpeas and some flavourings and you already have a dish.

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for frying
1 red onion, chopped
3 cups chicken stock
2 x 400g cans peeled Italian tomatoes, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
good pinch of saffron threads
400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed well
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 x 180g snapper fillets, skin on
1 tablespoon butter
2 large zucchini, cut into matchsticks
1 cup plain unsweetened yoghurt
1 clove garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons lemon juice
¼ cup mixed chopped fresh herbs (basil, parsley and coriander)

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large frying pan over low heat and gently fry the onion until soft.

Add the stock, tomatoes and their juice and garlic, turn the heat to high and cook uncovered until the stock is reduced by half and the tomatoes are pulpy. Add the saffron and chickpeas, and simmer another 10 minutes. Season to taste and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Heat a little oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook the snapper, skin side down, over high heat until the skin is crisp. Place skin side up on an oven tray and roast for 5 minutes or until cooked.

Heat the butter and remaining oil in a frying pan and fry the zucchini over medium heat for 2 minutes or until soft. Season to taste.

Combine the yoghurt, crushed garlic, lemon juice and herbs then season to taste.

Divide the chickpea mixture among 4 shallow bowls. Top with some zucchini and fish. Serve the remaining zucchini and the herb yoghurt in bowls separately.

SLOW-ROASTED LAMB WITH RICE & GREEN LENTILS

SERVES 4

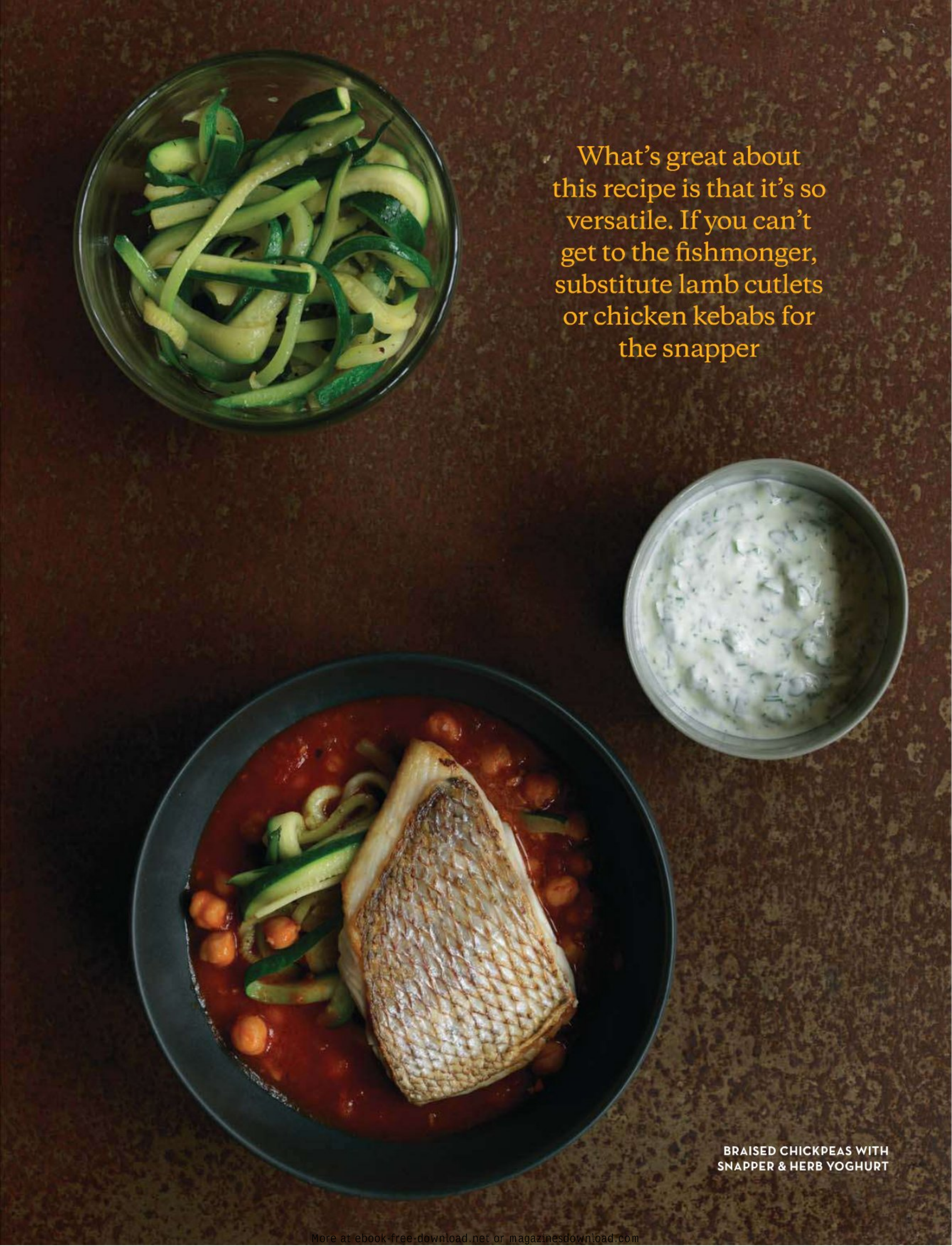
Slow cooking is one of the favoured methods of the moment and for good reason – you can do your preparation well in advance and it develops wonderful flavours and texture. You can vary the dried herbs, depending on what you have on hand (you might use dried rosemary) or use fresh herbs.

1 lemon, thinly sliced
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 teaspoons fennel seeds
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1.5kg shoulder of lamb
4 tablespoons olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
100g marinated feta, drained
¼ cup water
½ cup green lentils
6 spring onions, chopped
1 cup basmati rice
2 cups hot chicken stock or water
¼ cup roasted slivered almonds
⅓ cup chopped coriander
rocket leaves and lemon wedges to serve

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Place 2 large sheets of tinfoil in a cross pattern on the bench, top with half the lemon, garlic, fennel seeds and oregano. Put the lamb on top then sprinkle with the remaining flavourings. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil, season then wrap in the foil and place in a roasting dish. Roast for 4 hours or until very tender. Let rest for 15 minutes before slicing. Reheat pan juices.

For the dressing, blend the feta and water in a processor until smooth.

Simmer the lentils for 10 minutes. Drain. Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan and cook the spring onions over low heat until soft. Add the rice and stir for 1 minute. Add the stock or water, season and bring to the boil. Stir in the lentils, reduce the heat to low, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave covered for 10 minutes then fluff up with a fork. Stir in half the almonds and the coriander. Serve slices of lamb on a bed of rocket. Drizzle with pan juices and feta dressing. Serve the rice and lentils topped with the remaining almonds and lemon wedges alongside.



What's great about this recipe is that it's so versatile. If you can't get to the fishmonger, substitute lamb cutlets or chicken kebabs for the snapper

BRAISED CHICKPEAS WITH SNAPPER & HERB YOGHURT



POTATO GNOCCHI WITH ROASTED CAPSICUM & TUNA PROVENÇALE SAUCE

SERVES 4

I live in rural New South Wales and have a large vegetable garden. Some of my efforts are hit and miss, but when it comes to growing potatoes I am a star (so is everyone else, I have discovered). After giving away as many as I can, I still have a surplus and am always looking for dishes where potato is the hero. Gnocchi has become one of my favourites, as it marries well with so many different sauces and is particularly good with tuna (I used Sirena brand in oil; in New Zealand Callipo is a good brand).

- 2 red capsicums, cored and sliced
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 650g floury potatoes, washed
- 120g flour
- 2 x 185g cans tuna in oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped pitted green olives
- 1 tablespoon baby capers in brine
- 1 stick celery, trimmed and finely chopped
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the capsicums in a roasting dish, drizzle with 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, season to taste and sprinkle with sugar. Roast for 30 minutes, turning once, until browned on the edges.

For the gnocchi, cook the potatoes uncovered in simmering salted water for about 30 minutes until tender. Drain and, when cool enough to handle, push through a ricer or mouli, removing the skin.

Place the potato on a work surface, season then sprinkle with flour ¼ cup at a time and knead to form a smooth dough. You may need to add a bit less or more flour, depending on the wetness of the potato. Divide the dough into 6 and roll each piece into a log about 2cm thick. Using a sharp knife, cut each log into 2cm pieces.

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, reduce the heat, add salt and cook the gnocchi in batches until they rise to the surface. Remove with a slotted spoon and place in four shallow bowls. Drizzle with a little oil.

Combine the tuna, remaining ingredients and the last 2 tablespoons of oil, season to taste then serve on top of the gnocchi. Top with roasted capsicum and serve immediately with a green salad on the side.

PENNE WITH BROCCOLI & CHORIZO

SERVES 4

I love the spiciness of chorizo sausages and often eat them on their own just with tomato chutney and fresh bread. For this dish I like to use the fresh chorizo made by my local butcher, but if you can't get these you can use the firmer variety from the deli, or use another spicy sausage. The broccoli tends to fall apart while cooking with the pasta, but don't be alarmed – that is what you want.

- 400g penne
- 350g broccoli or broccolini, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons light olive oil
- 1 leek (white part only), sliced
- 100g pancetta or bacon, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 250g fresh chorizo or other spicy sausages, skinned and coarsely chopped
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons flat-leafed parsley leaves
- 2 tablespoons shaved parmesan
- crusty bread to serve

Simmer the pasta and broccoli in salted water for about 10 minutes until the pasta is al dente. Drain.

Meanwhile, in a saucepan heat the oil and fry the leek, pancetta, garlic and chorizo over medium heat for 5 minutes until the leek is soft and the chorizo is cooked then season to taste.

Toss the pasta mixture with the chorizo mixture and serve topped with parsley and shaved parmesan. Serve with crusty bread.

Credits: All props privately owned.

BRAISED ONION & SMOKED SALMON TART WITH HERB SALAD

SERVES 4

As you can buy smoked salmon in vacuum packs with a long use-by date, I always have some on hand in the refrigerator for a sandwich or to toss through pasta. Likewise, while I love making puff pastry, I keep a few packets of the good-quality bought stuff in the freezer for those days when I have run out of time or puff.

The combination of pastry, slow-cooked onion, sour cream and smoked salmon is a winner and the herb salad cuts through the richness. You can also make these tarts smaller and serve them as an entrée.

- 2 sheets frozen butter puff pastry
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 onions, sliced
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 200g sour cream
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives and dill
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 400g smoked salmon, sliced
- 2 cups mixed soft herbs, including dill, chives, basil, mint and coriander
- 2 tablespoons light olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Cut one sheet of pastry into 4 squares and brush the edges with beaten egg. Cut 1cm strips from the other sheet of pastry and place on the edges of the squares to form a border. Press down gently and brush with remaining egg. Place on an oven tray and bake for 15 minutes or until golden and crisp. Cool to room temperature.

In a saucepan, heat the oil and butter, add the onion and ¼ cup of water, cover and cook over low heat until the onion is soft (about 20 minutes). Remove the lid, add the vinegar and cook over medium heat until the liquid has evaporated. Cool.

Mix the sour cream, chopped herbs and lemon juice, and season to taste.

Fill the pastries with the onion mixture then top with the sour cream and smoked salmon. Toss the herbs with oil and lemon juice, season to taste and serve on top of the tarts. ✪



MODERN BRITISH

Fiona Smith finds the excellent contemporary British cuisine has its roots in tradition

Whoever thought British food would become cool? After decades suffering a reputation for producing little more than boarding-school fare, Britain now boasts some of the world's best restaurants and the recent announcement of the closure of El Bulli, widely considered the number one restaurant in the world, could catapult England's Fat Duck into the top spot. But what has changed? Not much. Everyday British food has long reflected life on the farm. Locally grown and raised produce is central to its cooking, but now the rest of the world finds this trendy. The Priory Inn in Tetbury sums this up with a quote on its menu from US author and naturalist Henry David Thoreau: "Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit". It is also a great style of cuisine for the home cook, as many dishes celebrate the simplicity of fine ingredients without overcomplicated techniques.

These dishes are inspired by some of the delicious food I had on a recent trip to England where the cuisine remains nostalgic and comfortingly familiar but, at the same time, distinctly modern.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY FIONA SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



PORK CHOP & CRACKLING
WITH PERRY GRAVY

Duck breast is perfect for special occasions and these are even better stuffed with confit

PORK CHOP & CRACKLING WITH PERRY GRAVY

SERVES 4

The good old pork chop at the Priory Inn, in Tetbury, looked a bit flash, served with the fat and skin removed and made into a crackling garnish. This is actually very practical as the thick fat and skin on the chop stays a bit undercooked when panfried, but when removed it can be cooked for longer, giving a lovely crunchy result. The Priory Inn serves the pork chop with apple cider butter, but I like a gravy made with perry, a type of pear cider. I used Kingston, made in Napier (for more on perry, see page 24).

4 pork loin chops
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
3 sprigs thyme
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 teaspoons flour
200ml perry or apple cider

Cut the fat and skin off the chops and slice into 5mm strips.

Heat a large frying pan to hot. Add the fat and fry for 10 minutes or until very crisp, turning frequently (the fat will render during cooking and the skin will cook in the fat). Set aside.

Heat the butter and oil in the same pan over a low-medium heat, add the onion and thyme, and fry gently for 15 minutes until very soft and just beginning to colour. Remove from the pan, discard the thyme and set the onion aside.

Increase the heat to medium-high. Season the pork chops with salt and pepper, and cook for 4-5 minutes each side until golden. Set aside to rest.

Return the onion to the pan and stir in the flour. Cook, stirring, for 1-2 minutes then slowly stir in the perry to make a smooth gravy. Stir in any juices from the resting chops and season with salt and pepper.

Serve the chops with the pumpkin and spinach (recipe follows), the crackling and the gravy.

Stir-Fried Butternut & Spinach
1 tablespoon olive oil
400g butternut pumpkin, peeled, seeded and grated
300g spinach, washed, sliced and tough stems discarded
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oil in a wok over medium heat. Add the pumpkin and spinach, and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes until soft. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

CONFIT STUFFED DUCK BREAST WITH SWEET & SOUR RHUBARB SAUCE

SERVES 4

Duck is a regular on menus around England and I especially like this version with sweet and sour rhubarb sauce served at the Stagg Inn, Herefordshire. Rhubarb is a great foil for rich foods such as duck and salmon. Duck breast is perfect for special occasions and these are made even better with a stuffing of rich duck confit. I like to serve this with potato and orange kumara mash, or rice and a watercress or plain green salad, or steamed green vegetables.

400g rhubarb, cut into 2cm pieces
3 tablespoons brown sugar
zest and juice of 1 orange
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 cinnamon stick
2 confit duck legs (available from specialty stores)
200g pork or chicken mince
½ teaspoon five spice powder
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
2 teaspoons finely chopped thyme leaves
4 duck breasts
salt for rubbing

For the sauce, place the rhubarb in a saucepan with the sugar, orange zest and juice, vinegar, cinnamon and 3 tablespoons of water. Cover then place over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring once. Uncover, stir and simmer a further 2 minutes. Set aside.

Scrape the fat off the duck confit legs and reserve. Peel off the skin and fat attached to the legs and discard. Finely chop the meat and place in a bowl with 1 teaspoon of the reserved fat (refrigerate the remainder to use for roasting potatoes), the pork or chicken mince, five spice, parsley and thyme. Mash everything together with a fork until the mixture is even and reserve.

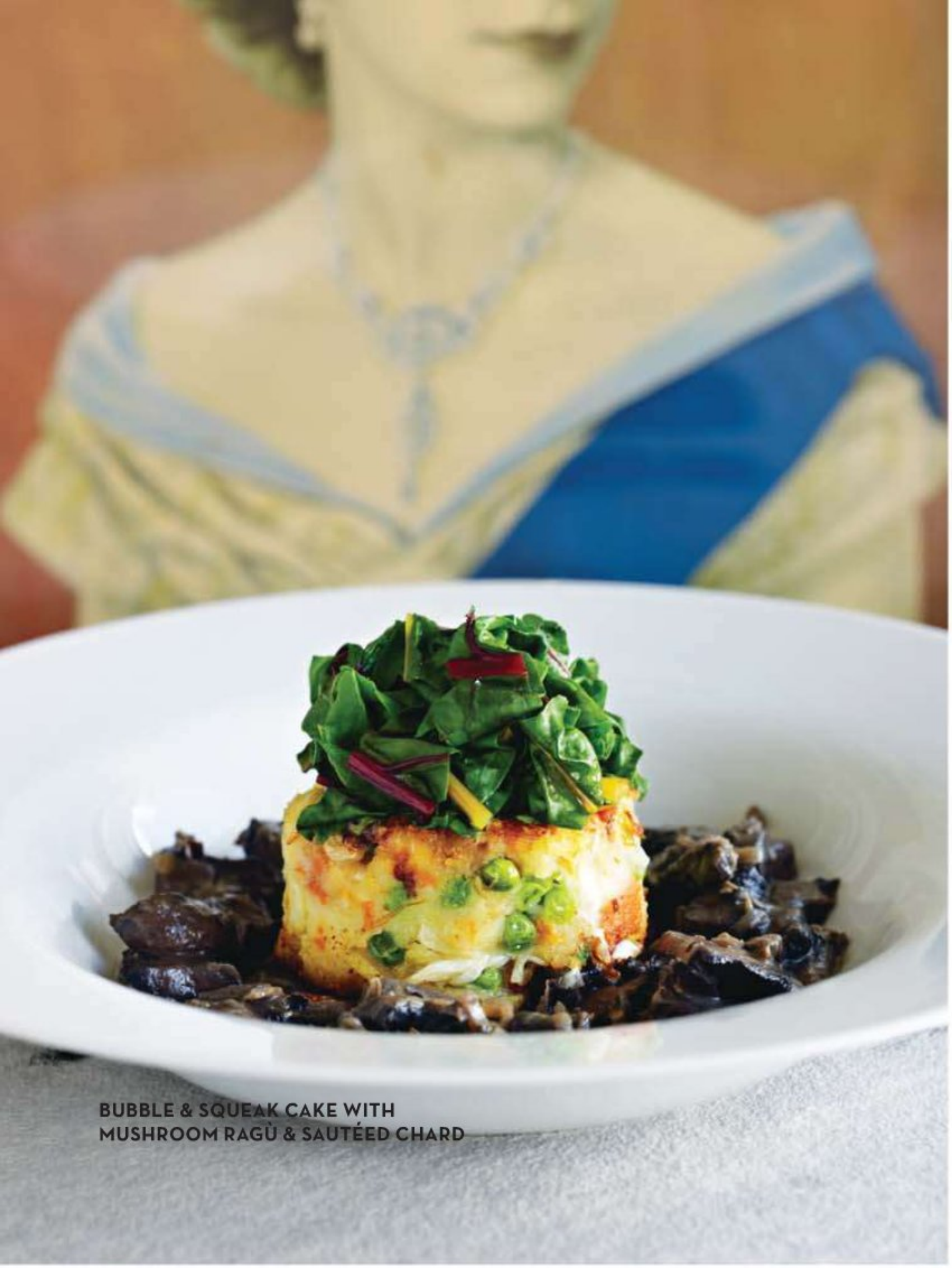
Pat the skin on the duck breasts dry. Score the skin diagonally almost down to the flesh – be careful not to go all the way through – at 1cm intervals. Rub salt into the scored fat then, using your hands, make a small gap between the skin and meat. Carefully pull the skin away from the meat, leaving the sides attached. Stuff this cavity with the duck confit mixture.

Preheat the oven to 200°C and heat an ovenproof frying pan over medium-high heat. Place the duck breasts in the pan skin side down and cook for 7 minutes until well browned then turn over, place in the oven and cook for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, cover loosely with tinfoil and leave to rest in a warm place.

Slice the duck breasts in half on the diagonal and serve with the rhubarb sauce.



CONFIT STUFFED DUCK BREAST WITH SWEET & SOUR RHUBARB SAUCE



BUBBLE & SQUEAK CAKE WITH MUSHROOM RAGÙ & SAUTÉED CHARD

BUBBLE & SQUEAK CAKE WITH MUSHROOM RAGÙ & SAUTÉED CHARD

SERVES 6

No one takes the local-produce focus more seriously than the Priory Inn where I had this dish. Ninety per cent of ingredients are sourced within a 30-mile radius, with the likes of salt, pepper and sugar essential exceptions. Traditionally made with leftovers, bubble and squeak is easily made from scratch. To roast the vegetables cut them in varying sizes according to how quickly they cook.

500g potatoes, peeled and diced 2cm
350g kumara, peeled and diced 3cm
2 carrots (200g), peeled and sliced 1cm
2 parsnips (200g), peeled and sliced 1cm
3 tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon salt
40g butter
250g cabbage, thinly sliced
1 cup peas
400g rainbow chard or silverbeet, washed

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Combine the potatoes, kumara, carrots and parsnips with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and spread on a roasting tray. Roast for 25 minutes until tender. Place in a bowl with the salt and mash coarsely.

Heat the butter in a large frying pan over medium heat and sauté the cabbage and peas until the cabbage is wilted (about 3 minutes). Add this to the mashed vegetables and mix well. Leave until cool enough to handle (about 10 minutes) then divide into 6 and shape into cakes. This can be done by hand for organic-looking cakes, or if you want neat cakes, press the mixture firmly into 7cm-8cm ring moulds or cookie cutters.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat and fry the cakes for 5 minutes each side until golden.

While they cook, separate the stems of the chard or silverbeet from the leaves. Slice the leaves thickly and stems finely. Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan or wok over medium heat, add the stems and stir-fry for 5 minutes. Add the leaves and 1 tablespoon of water. Stir-fry for 1 minute until just wilted.

Serve with the mushroom ragù (recipe follows) and top with sautéed chard or silverbeet.

Mushroom Ragù

20g dried porcini mushrooms
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
3 shallots, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
500g Portabello mushrooms, sliced
2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
250ml vegetable stock
60ml crème fraîche
60ml Marsala wine or dry sherry

Place the porcini in a small bowl, cover with warm water and soak for 15 minutes. Drain and chop finely.

Heat the oil and butter in a large saucepan over medium-low heat and gently cook the shallots and garlic for 5 minutes until soft.

Add the mushrooms, thyme, salt and pepper. Cook for 15 minutes until the mushrooms have collapsed then add the porcini and vegetable stock, and simmer for 10 minutes. Lastly, stir in the crème fraîche and Marsala or sherry, heat through and serve with the bubble and squeak cakes. >



HAM HOCK & PARSLEY
TERRINE WITH
PICCALILLI SALAD

HAM HOCK & PARSLEY TERRINE WITH PICCALILLI SALAD

SERVES 6 AS A LUNCH OR LIGHT DINNER

Though terrine is of French origin, the English have been "potting" meat since mediaeval times. Both involve similar cooking techniques. At The Wellington, an award-winning gastro-pub in Herefordshire, the ham hock terrine is served with the very English preserve piccalilli. I like to make a twist on the traditional pickle with a "made on the day" version – more a pickled salad than a dense preserve. You will need a small terrine dish or loaf tin for a loaf shape, but as the terrine is not cooked you can set it in just about anything you want. For a bigger terrine, simply double the ingredients; the cooking time for the hocks will be the same. Start this recipe a day in advance.

- 2 x 1.2kg ham hocks
- 1 onion, quartered
- 2 carrots, thickly sliced
- 2 sticks celery, thickly sliced
- 1 bunch parsley, stalks and leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 6 cloves
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 2 x 330ml bottles dry cider
- 2 sheets gelatine
- 1 tablespoon green peppercorns in brine, drained

Place the hocks in a large saucepan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and boil for 5 minutes then drain well. Place the ham hocks back in the saucepan and add the onion, carrots, celery, parsley stalks (reserve the leaves), bay leaves, thyme, cloves, peppercorns and pour the cider over. Top up with water to cover the hocks. Bring to a simmer and simmer gently for 3 hours, skimming the surface occasionally, until the meat is very tender. Cool in the stock.

Remove the ham hocks from the liquid then remove the skin and discard. Pull the meat off the bones and discard as much fat and sinew as you can.

Strain off 300ml of the stock through a sieve lined with muslin or a clean cloth. Bring the sieved stock to the boil in a saucepan then remove from the heat.

Fill a shallow dish with cold water and submerge the gelatine sheets one at a time to soften for about a minute then remove one at a time and squeeze out excess water. Stir the gelatine sheets into the hot stock until completely dissolved.

Chop the parsley leaves and mix in a bowl with the ham and green peppercorns. Line a 600ml terrine or similar-sized dish with plastic wrap, leaving enough overhang to cover the terrine mixture. Arrange the mixture in the dish, trying to place long pieces of ham horizontally, then pour in the stock. Bang the dish a couple of times to settle the ingredients. Cover with the overhanging plastic wrap, lightly weight the top of the mixture and refrigerate overnight to set.

To serve, unwrap the top, tip upside down on to a serving plate and peel off the plastic wrap. Slice and serve with piccalilli salad (recipe follows) and crusty bread. This keeps for a week in the refrigerator.

Piccalilli Salad

- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 60ml cider vinegar
- 300g small cauliflower florets
- 150g beans, ends trimmed
- 1 red capsicum, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 yellow capsicum, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2-3 red chillies, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon mustard (Dijon or English if you like it hot)
- salt to taste

Place the sugar, turmeric and vinegar in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Set aside to cool.

Bring a saucepan of water to the boil, add the cauliflower, cook for 1 minute then drain and rinse with cold water.

Bring a fresh saucepan of water to the boil, add the beans and cook for 1 minute then drain and rinse with cold water. Place the cauliflower and beans in a bowl with the capsicums, red onion, chillies and mustard then pour the vinegar mixture over. Toss well and season to taste with salt. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

CABBAGE & SHRIMP SALAD

SERVES 4

I had this salad at Fergus Henderson's restaurant St John in London. It was simplicity itself and utterly delicious. And it's this simplicity of the food that I love about St John. It is constantly surprising. On this visit we ate Eccles cake with Lancashire cheese. On its own, the cheese seemed bland. But together with a piece of densely fruity Eccles cake – what a difference. The mild cheese complemented the caramel cake so beautifully that both were infinitely better with the pairing.

Similarly with this dish, what sounds basic burst with fresh and surprising flavour.

- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ Savoy cabbage
- 1 bulb fennel
- 20g chervil
- 3 tablespoons capers, drained
- 600g cooked shrimps (canned are fine) or small prawns

For the dressing, in a bowl whisk together the lemon juice, salt and pepper then whisk in the olive oil. Set aside.

Remove the core from the cabbage and discard. Slice the cabbage finely. Discard any thick pieces; you just want the tender leaves. Place the sliced cabbage in a bowl.

Slice the fennel very finely and add to the cabbage along with the chervil, capers and shrimps. Add the lemon dressing and toss well.

Fiona Smith was hosted in the UK by Visit Britain, visitbritain.co.nz. For contact details of venues visited, see cuisine.co.nz

Credits: Rosenthal Moon plate and pasta plate, and Paul Wirths' Vivendi cutlery, all from The Studio of Tableware; Queen's coronation portrait courtesy of Monterey Coffee Lounge, Grey Lynn; Royal Doulton Bulldog from Antiques of Epsom; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



CABBAGE & SHRIMP SALAD



sunday best

What better way to wind up the weekend, says **Ginny Grant**, than with a comforting casual dinner?

As summer turns into autumn we move towards more comforting food. For a casual Sunday dinner, I want something satisfying while still using some late-summer vegetables. A hot soup and a slow braise fit the bill. The main course doesn't need to be served piping hot – in fact, I prefer the vegetables and meat at room temperature – and the passionfruit delicious is surprisingly light and tart.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY GINNY GRANT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



ARTICHOKE, OLIVE & PARMESAN GOUGÈRES

ARTICHOKE, OLIVE & PARMESAN GOUGÈRES

MAKES AROUND 40

These choux pastries are easy to make and the batter can be frozen for another time and popped straight into the oven when needed.

- ¼ cup bought marinated or grilled artichoke hearts, drained and coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup pitted black olives, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leafed parsley
- 75g parmesan, freshly grated
- 250ml milk
- 100g butter, softened
- pinch of salt
- 150g flour
- 4 eggs

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Mix together the artichokes, olives, parsley and half the parmesan, and set aside.

In a medium saucepan heat the milk with the butter and just bring to the boil then remove from the heat and beat in the salt and flour with a wooden spoon.

Return to the heat and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes; the mix should be in a ball and have come away cleanly from the sides.

Remove from the heat and add the eggs one at a time, beating well between each addition, until the batter is smooth and glossy (it is easier to do this in a mixer).

Add the artichoke mixture and incorporate well. Drop tablespoonfuls of the batter on an oven tray lined with baking paper, allowing room for the gougères to expand then sprinkle the tops with the remaining grated parmesan.

At this point you could freeze the gougères. Simply put into the freezer on the tray then once frozen store them in a zip-lock bag.

When ready to bake, place on a baking tray as above and bake at 200°C for 10 minutes then lower the heat to 180°C and cook for a further 30 minutes.

If baking straightaway cook for 40 minutes at 180°C or until golden and puffed. Don't be tempted to open the oven door or they won't puff up. Allow to cool for a few minutes before serving and eating immediately.

CAULIFLOWER SOUP WITH CAPERS & CROÛTONS

SERVES 6-8

When cooked into a purée, cauliflower makes for a deliciously velvety soup. I like the combination of the delicately flavoured soup with the robust crisp capers and croûtons adding a textural contrast and boosting flavour. This is an excellent soup for vegans, though if you prefer a richer soup you could add a little cream to finish. The soup can be made ahead, but make the croûtons just before serving.

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for frying the bread and capers
- 1 leek (white part only), thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 head cauliflower, cut into florets (reserve 1 cup)
- 1 litre vegetable stock (or water), plus extra if needed
- sea salt to taste
- 1 cup crustless 1cm-diced stale bread
- 3 tablespoons capers

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan. Add the leek and fry gently until soft but not coloured (around 10 minutes) then add the garlic and cauliflower. Fry gently for a few minutes until the cauliflower softens. Add the vegetable stock and bring to a simmer. Cook for 20 minutes until the cauliflower is very soft.

Purée the soup; if it is very thick add a little more stock or water to thin it down. Season with salt to taste.

In a frying pan heat a little olive oil and gently fry the bread until golden. Drain on paper towels.

Cut the reserved cauliflower florets into small pieces and fry in the same pan until tender and golden. Add the capers, fry for a further few minutes then add to the bread.

To serve, reheat the soup, adding water or stock if necessary to thin it down. Serve immediately topped with croûtons, cauliflower and capers.

SLOW-BRAISED LEG OF LAMB WITH TOMATO & POMEGRANATE GLAZE

SERVES 6-8

As much as I enjoy rare lamb, every so often I like to do a leg in this manner – the meat becomes extra flavoursome and so tender it falls off the bone. You could also use a lamb shoulder here if you prefer. The piquant glaze makes a great foil for the richness of the meat. This dish is incredibly easy – once the meat is browned and the glaze applied, it's put into a very low oven and left for 4 hours.

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 leg of lamb (around 2kg), shank end cut off and pelvic bone removed
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 red onions, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
- 4 cloves garlic, mashed to a paste with some salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 250ml chicken or lamb stock (or water)

Preheat the oven to 120°C.

In a large, heavy casserole heat the oil. Season the lamb with salt and pepper then place in the casserole and brown all over. (If you don't have a casserole large enough, you can brown the lamb in a frying pan then transfer to a roasting dish and cover with tinfoil.) Remove the lamb and set aside then add the onions to the pan and fry until soft.

Mix together the tomato paste, pomegranate molasses, garlic and cumin then brush the mix over the lamb. Return to the pan, add the stock or water, cover with a lid and place in the oven.

Cook the lamb for 4 hours. The meat should almost be falling off the bone and there will be quite a lot of cooking juices. Set the lamb aside for at least 30 minutes to rest before carving and serving.

Skim the fat from the pan juices, reheat them then serve over the meat. If necessary, the lamb can also be gently reheated in the casserole on the stove.



CAULIFLOWER SOUP WITH
CAPERS & CROÛTONS



SPINACH LEMON BURGHUL

SLOW-BRAISED LEG OF LAMB WITH TOMATO & POMEGRANATE GLAZE

SWEET & SOUR ROASTED PUMPKIN





SWEET & SOUR ROASTED PUMPKIN

SERVES 6-8

New-season pumpkin often isn't as sweet as it is in the middle of winter so I sometimes add a little honey to the mix. Sweet and sour combinations are a favourite of mine as they cut through richness.

I use golden raisins to complement the orange and pink, but ordinary raisins are fine. Have the vegetables prepared and raisins pre-soaked by the time the lamb is ready to come out of the oven. Turn up the oven once you have taken out the lamb and this dish will be ready by the time the meat has rested.

- 3 tablespoons golden raisins
- 3 tablespoons sherry or water
- 1 clove garlic, crushed to a paste with ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ medium pumpkin (around 800g peeled), skin removed and thinly sliced
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Soak the raisins in the sherry or water for 20 minutes.

In a large bowl, mix together the garlic, honey and olive oil. Add the pumpkin and toss in the marinade then lay out flat on a baking tray. Bake for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the onion in a bowl and pour the red wine vinegar over. Set aside.

To serve, place the pumpkin on a platter, spread the onions over the top and scatter the raisins over.

SPINACH LEMON BURGHUL

SERVES 6-8

Salads or side dishes of vegetables with grains, rice, wheat or pasta often have the ratio of vegetables too low. The star really is the vegetable, while the grain is the supporting player. So this side is all about the spinach with the lemon-soaked burghul providing a bit of sharpness.

- juice and grated zest of 2 lemons
- ¾ cup coarse burghul
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
- good pinch of chilli flakes
- 400g spinach, washed and stems removed
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the lemon juice in a measuring cup and add enough water to make ½ cup then combine in a bowl with the lemon zest and burghul. Set aside for 30 minutes.

In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil then add the garlic and fry gently for 1 minute without colouring. Add the chilli flakes then the spinach and stir until the spinach has wilted. Add the burghul and stir through well. Season with salt and pepper.

PASSIONFRUIT DELICIOUS

SERVES 6

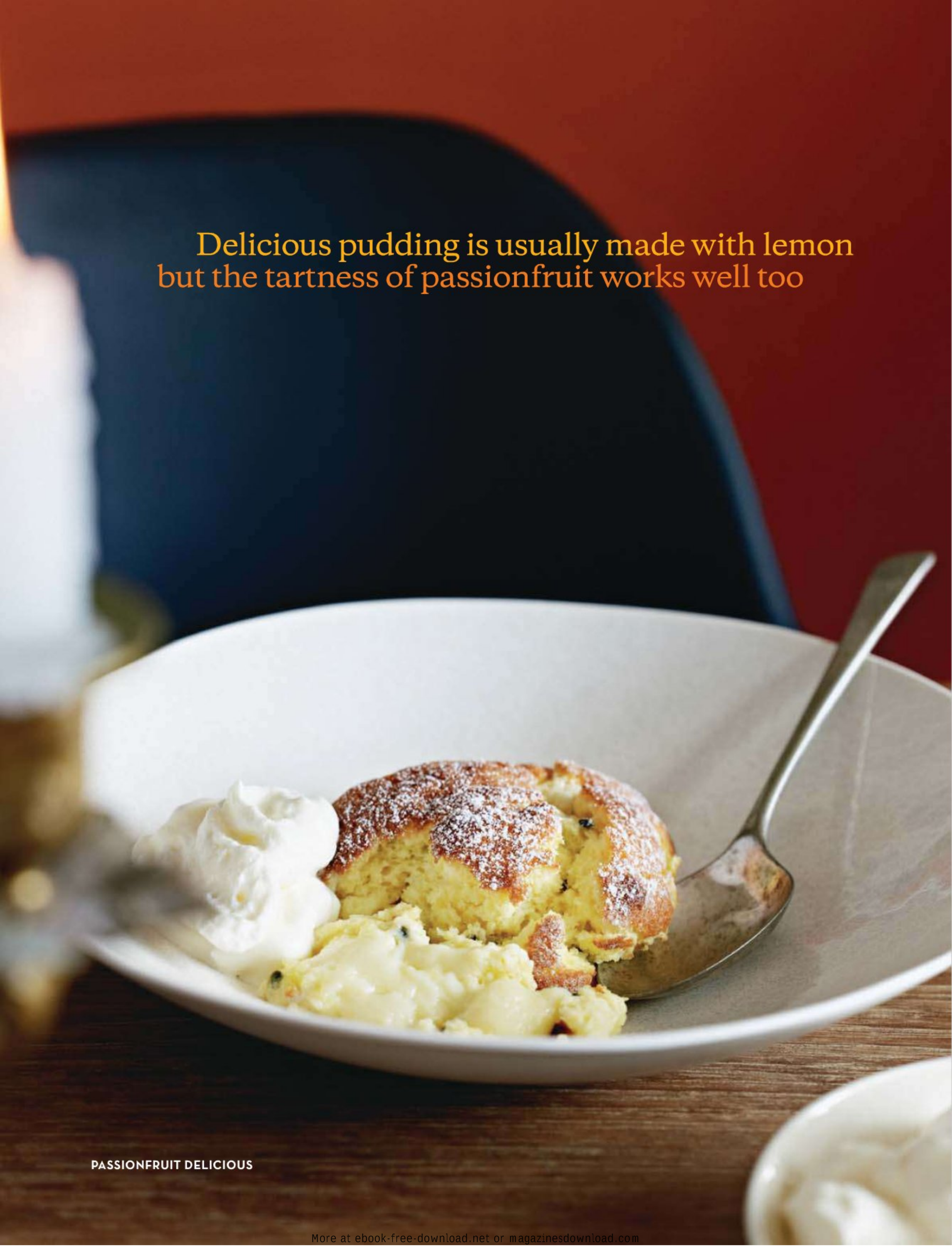
Passionfruit with their tart and sweet notes are one of my favourite fruits. If they are very sweet you may like to add a little lemon juice to the mix.

- 50g butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 eggs, separated
- 1 cup milk
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 90g passionfruit pulp (about 9 passionfruit)
- icing sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Cream the butter and sugar then add the egg yolks one at a time. Alternate small additions of milk and flour until all mixed in then stir in the passionfruit.

Whisk the egg whites until firm then fold into the mix. Pour into a baking dish, place in a roasting dish and pour in water to halfway up the sides. Bake for 40 minutes until puffed and golden. Dust with icing sugar. Serve immediately with whipped cream.

Credits: Sophie Conran dinner plate, iittala Aino Aalto blue tumblers, Peugeot pepper mill and Arc Cabernet decanter, all from The Studio of Tableware; vintage teak desk and Eames look chairs from Republic Home; small Rockpool dish and shallow bowl from Nest; antique candelabra from Haunt Antiques. For full details, see Credits Index.


Delicious pudding is usually made with lemon
but the tartness of passionfruit works well too
PASSIONFRUIT DELICIOUS


WHARE KEA CHALET
ALBERT BURN SADDLE
OPPOSITE MT ASPIRING



OUT OF THE BLUE

At Whare Kea Lodge & Chalet, one of the many wonders is executive chef **James Stapley's** food

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY JAMES STAPLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST





The experience at Whare Kea gives a whole new meaning to the notion of high end. On the shore of Lake Wanaka, the lodge proper looks out on the spectacular Southern Alps, a playground for those into outdoor pursuits like owners Martyn and Louise Myer – of the Australian retail dynasty. Or a stunning view for those who have a different idea of a holiday.

The Myers originally built the lodge as a luxurious holiday house for themselves and friends after falling in love with the area during skiing trips. They opened it to guests in 1996 and named it after the native mountain parrot, one of the many aspects of the area that fascinated them.

The peak of the experience is the chalet, perched 1750 metres up in the mountains facing Mt Aspiring, with a view stretching north-east to Mt Cook. It's breathtaking.

Martyn, an engineer by trade, designed the chalet, an external steel A-frame structure anchored to the mountain aided by huge "baskets" of rocks. With power generated from solar panels and a small wind turbine, and bottled gas for cooking, it is a far cry from the usual mountain hut.

Guests are flown from the lodge by helicopter for perhaps a picnic or to stay in the two double guest rooms, hosted by staff from the mothership, who stay in a bunk room.

Adventurous types can tramp back down with guides, most of whom have experience in the Himalayas. However, that bypasses the chance to fly back over pristine glaciers.

But for *Cuisine*, the highlight is the food. James first came to our attention as the head chef at Pegasus Bay Winery Restaurant when it won the Best Casual Restaurant in the 2005 *Cuisine* Restaurant of the Year Awards.

I ring around suppliers and find what is the best fish available. They arrive about 6pm and are on the table by 8pm

Classically trained in London where he worked at various fine-dining establishments, James developed his own, more pared-back, produce-driven style over the four years he spent at Pegasus Bay.

"I started taking things out of dishes that weren't necessary – streamlining the food and finding things that work rather than being over-laboured.

"I like the actual food to speak for itself – not hidden behind anything, but just enhanced."

To expand his ingredient palette, he grows his own vegetables at home to use in the kitchen at Whare Kea. "I'm growing all the stuff I can't get – such as blood vein sorrel, purple Brussels sprouts, heirloom carrots."

When he worked in London, being local and seasonal wasn't the norm. But coming to Wanaka, he says, whether you like it or not, your range largely has to be. Fortunately, he has plenty of top-quality local produce to work with – the "fantastic" Aoraki salmon raised in glacial waters, Cardrona Merino lamb, Cairnmuir olive oil, saffron...

And the fresh produce available largely dictates his menu.

"I ring around suppliers and find what is the best fish available. They arrive about 6pm and are on the table by 8pm. I'm never dissatisfied with what comes in so I work around it. It's nice to be serving produce in its perfect form."

From left: Executive chef James Stapley; the interior of Whare Kea Chalet; the steel A-frame structure of the chalet is anchored to the mountain with huge baskets filled with rocks



AORAKI SALMON CONFIT WITH HORSERADISH CRÈME, BABY PEAS & VANILLA OIL

AORAKI SALMON CONFIT WITH HORSERADISH CRÈME, BABY PEAS & VANILLA OIL

SERVES 4

There are many ways to make salmon confit – using vacuum-pack machines, water baths, thermometers and so on. But I find this method a lot less fuss with fantastic results.

4 skinned and boned salmon fillets, 80g-100g each
1 clove garlic, cut in half
Maldon sea salt
10 coriander seeds, freshly ground
finely grated zest and juice of ½ lemon
25g fresh horseradish, finely grated, or 1 large tablespoon Mandys Horseradish
100g crème fraîche
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon Chardonnay vinegar
pinch of sugar
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
½ vanilla bean, seeds scraped out
16 fresh pea pods and shoots, podded (or snow peas or ½ cup frozen edamame beans, available from Asian stores)
8 basil leaves, thinly sliced
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Rub the salmon all over with the garlic then sea salt. Sprinkle the coriander seeds over the salmon then rub the lemon zest over. Allow to sit covered at room temperature for 25 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 70°C.

To make the horseradish crème, combine the horseradish, crème fraîche, mustard, vinegar and sugar in a bowl, whisk together and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

To make the vanilla oil, warm the olive oil with the vanilla bean and seeds on low for 2 minutes (this can be done the day before). Allow to cool.

Place the peas and basil in a bowl. Spoon a little vanilla oil over and the lemon juice then season with salt and pepper.

Place the salmon on an oven tray, drizzle with a little olive oil and put in the oven for 20-35 minutes, depending on the thickness, until it feels firm.

Place the salmon on serving plates, crack some pepper over then spoon the peas around each portion. Dress with a little vanilla oil and put a few pea shoots around then top with a little horseradish crème.

HALOUMI-STUFFED ZUCCHINI FLOWERS WITH PEPERONATA

SERVES 4

Zucchini flowers start to deteriorate as soon as you pick them so they need to be used the same day.

2 red capsicums
1 yellow capsicum
1 green capsicum
olive oil for frying
1 red onion, sliced
4 cloves garlic, sliced
20 capers
6 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
1 teaspoon chopped red chilli
3 anchovies, chopped (I use Ortiz)
1 teaspoon chopped thyme leaves
1 teaspoon chopped rosemary leaves
1 cup sliced green basil
8 zucchini flowers, baby zucchini attached (available from growers, markets and some greengrocers)
8 x 2cm-dice haloumi (Zany Zeus is best for this)
1 cup purple basil leaves
rice bran oil for deep-frying
handful baby watercress
juice of 1 lemon
1 cup self-raising flour
pinch of salt
330ml bottle lager, cold

Char the capsicums over a naked flame until black. Put in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap for 10 minutes then peel, core and thinly slice.

For the peperonata, in a warm frying pan, place a little olive oil, the onion and garlic. Fry very gently for 10 minutes then add the capsicums, capers, tomatoes, chilli, anchovies, thyme and rosemary. Cook very gently for about 1 hour. Remove from the heat, mix in the green basil and allow to cool.

Separate the zucchini and flowers. Open up the flowers gently and break off the stamen. Fill each flower with haloumi and 1 leaf purple basil then pinch closed and twist to secure.

Fill a large saucepan to a third with rice bran oil and heat to 190°C.

Meanwhile, shave the baby zucchini into ribbons with a peeler, mix with watercress and the remaining purple basil, and dress with lemon juice and olive oil.

Place the flour and salt in a bowl and add enough beer to make a thin batter (the consistency of cream). Do not overmix; lumpy is fine. Dip the flowers in the batter to coat and fry until golden (about 2 minutes).

Place a little peperonata on each serving plate. Drain the flowers on kitchen paper and season. Place 2 flowers on each portion of peperonata and top with a little of the salad.

SALT COD TORTELLINI WITH SAUTÉED BABY PAUA & BROAD BEANS

SERVES 4

Cod was originally salted to preserve it and it would be as hard as a brick. We no longer have any need. Even if you salt it for just a couple of hours, the texture changes. The longer you salt it, the longer you need to soak it.

1 cup rock salt
400g very fresh skinned and boned blue cod fillet
200g "00" flour, plus extra for dusting
2 free-range eggs
splash of olive oil
good pinch of salt
4 baby paua
1 cup broad beans
500ml milk
1 bay leaf
6 black peppercorns
45ml extra virgin olive oil
6 cloves garlic, 3 chopped and 3 finely sliced
1 cup cream
¾ cup finely chopped parsley
freshly cracked black pepper
1 red chilli, finely sliced
juice of ½ lemon

For the salt cod, put ½ cup rock salt in a plastic container. Place the cod on top and cover with the remaining rock salt. Refrigerate for 3 hours.

Place the flour in a mound on the bench. Mix together the eggs, oil and salt. Make a well in the flour, add the egg mix and slowly incorporate into the flour with a fork (this can be >



HALOUMI-STUFFED
ZUCCHINI FLOWERS
WITH PEPERONATA





Glacier Burn Falls,
East Matukituki Valley, on Mt
Aspiring; above: East Matukituki
Ridge, opposite Mt Aspiring



SALT COD TORTELLINI
WITH SAUTÉED BABY
PAUA & BROAD BEANS



LAMB LOIN WITH BULGHUR WHEAT, SMOKED EGGPLANT PURÉE & BUFFALO YOGHURT

done in a food processor). Knead well for 10 minutes then wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Remove the paua from their shells using a small knife or spoon, gut it then slice lengthwise about 3ml thick. Refrigerate until needed.

Drop the broad beans into boiling water for 2 minutes then plunge into iced water. Peel then set aside.

Put the cod in a bowl of cold water for 10 minutes. Change the water and soak for another 10 minutes. Put the milk, bay leaf and peppercorns in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer. Add the cod and simmer for 5 minutes. Take from the heat, set aside for 5 minutes then remove the cod and flake.

Place 20ml of extra virgin olive oil, 3 cloves of chopped garlic and cream in a saucepan and simmer to reduce to about ⅓ cup. Add the salt cod and simmer for about 2 minutes then add ½ cup of the parsley and some cracked pepper. Allow to cool.

Roll the dough in a pasta machine, reducing the setting until on its lowest. Cut into 4 x 10cm squares with a serrated roller or a knife (you will have about twice the quantity of dough you need; freeze for another time). Place a generous spoonful of cod mix in the middle of each square, brush the edges with water and fold over to make a triangle. Join the 2 longest points together, sealing with a little water, to make a tortellini shape. Place the tortellini on a lightly floured tray.

Bring a saucepan of water to the boil. Drop in the tortellini and cook for 2 minutes.

Put the chilli, sliced garlic and remaining 25ml of extra virgin olive oil in a pan and fry gently until just golden. Drain the tortellini and place each in a warm bowl.

Put a non-stick pan on the heat until very hot.

Put broad beans and remaining ¼ cup parsley in with the chilli and garlic, and squeeze the lemon over.

Drizzle a little olive oil and salt and pepper on the paua. Place in the hot pan and toss for about 20 seconds.

Put the bean mix over the tortellini then spoon the paua over.

LAMB LOIN WITH BULGHUR WHEAT, SMOKED EGGPLANT PURÉE & BUFFALO YOGHURT

SERVES 4

I use Cardrona Merino lamb. I think it is the best in New Zealand and I've tried a lot. It's so tender and has loads of flavour. Cardrona Merino lamb is available at Wellington's Moore Wilson, as well as the Wanaka, Otago and Cromwell farmers' markets.

4 lamb racks (7-8 bones on each)
1 sprig rosemary, leaves coarsely chopped
6 cloves garlic, chopped
3 tablespoons light olive oil
1 cup coarse bulghur wheat
1 cup skinned, seeded and diced tomato
½ cup finely chopped flat-leafed parsley
½ cup toasted pine nuts
1 cup finely chopped mint leaves
1 cup peeled, seeded and diced cucumber
2 lemons
Maldon sea salt to taste
freshly ground black pepper
50g buffalo yoghurt (Clevedon Valley)
2 eggplants
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
3 medium shallots, finely diced
extra virgin olive oil (I use Cairnmuir)
wild Italian rocket (if available as it's very peppery; otherwise regular), dressed with lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil

Remove the bones from the racks and the sinew so you have very lean loins. Place in a bowl with the rosemary, 4 of the garlic cloves and 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours. Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Put the bulghur wheat in a small bowl and add enough boiling water to just cover. Seal the bowl with plastic wrap and leave to sit for 20 minutes. Run the steamed grains through your fingers to separate them. Allow to cool completely then add the tomato, parsley, pine nuts, ½ cup of mint, the cucumber, zest and juice of 1 lemon, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, sea salt and black pepper. Mix well and set aside at room temperature. >


ALTA
TARNS
MATUKITUKI FACE


CHAMOIS
LAKE
GALACTIC BYPASS

Combine the buffalo yoghurt with the remaining mint, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, sea salt, black pepper and juice of 1 lemon. Place in the fridge.

Place the eggplants over a naked gas flame until charred all over then place on a tray in the oven until soft (10-15 minutes).

Put the extra virgin olive oil in a saucepan. Add the remaining 2 cloves of garlic and the shallots. Fry gently over low heat until transparent but not coloured.

When the eggplant are cooked, remove the flesh from the skin and discard the skin. Coarsely chop the flesh and add to the pan. Season with salt and pepper. Cook on a low heat for about 6 minutes then remove from the heat and set aside.

Remove the lamb from the fridge and allow to sit for 10 minutes. Heat a frying pan to hot. Remove the garlic and rosemary from the lamb. Sear the lamb for about 30 seconds each side then place on an oven tray and place in the oven until pink (3-5 minutes, depending on the size of the loin). Rest in a warm place for 3 minutes.

Place some bulghur wheat on each serving plate, spoon some yoghurt around and drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil around. Reheat the eggplant purée. Slice the lamb and place on top of the bulghur wheat. Spoon some eggplant on top. Garnish with rocket.



ROSÉ JELLY WITH ELDERFLOWER CREAM, RASPBERRIES & VANILLA BEIGNETS

ROSÉ JELLY WITH ELDERFLOWER CREAM, RASPBERRIES & VANILLA BEIGNETS

MAKES 4-6 SMALL MOULDS

When you heat any kind of alcohol, a lot of the flavour goes. Here I make the jelly part with a small amount of the rosé, then add the rest to give the full rosé flavour.

3¾ leaves gelatine
375ml rosé (I use Wooing Tree)
225g caster sugar
250g fresh raspberries (when out of season use blueberries; frozen are fine)
20ml elderflower cordial, plus extra for serving
150ml cream
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
1 cup flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil
220ml boiling water
rice bran oil for deep frying
6 mint leaves, thinly sliced

To make the jelly, soak the gelatine in cold water for 5 minutes then squeeze out excess water.

Put 100ml of the rosé in a saucepan, add 175g of the sugar and stir over heat until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, add the gelatine, dissolve then add the rest of the rosé and pass through a fine sieve. Allow to cool.

Add a small amount of the jelly mix to the bottom of each mould (or you can use ramekins) and refrigerate for 20 minutes to set. Put 4 raspberries in each mould and pour in more jelly until it comes to a third from the top. Refrigerate to set (about 25 minutes) then add the last bit of jelly mix and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.

To make the elderflower cream, put the cordial and cream in a bowl and whip until soft peaks form. Place in the fridge for a couple of hours.

For the beignets, combine half the vanilla bean and the remaining 50g of caster sugar in a bowl and mix well. Set aside.

Place the flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl. Scrape out the seeds from the other vanilla bean half and add to the dry ingredients then add the olive oil. Pour in the boiling water and bring together with a large spoon. Shape into marble-sized balls.

Heat enough rice bran oil for deep-frying in a large saucepan to 180°C.

Dip the jelly moulds in a container of hot water then un-mould into the centre of each serving plate. Place a few raspberries around then drop the beignets into the hot rice bran oil and fry for about 2½ minutes. Drain then roll in the vanilla sugar.

Put the elderflower cream in a piping bag and place 3 or 4 mounds (or small spoonfuls) around the jelly. Add some beignets and mint then drizzle with a little more elderflower cordial and serve.

course you can do it ©

Jo Pearson prepares a simple yet impressive three-course dinner for six

shopping

GROCERIES
apple syrup
butter
butter beans or cannellini beans
calasparra rice
chicken stock
cream
extra virgin olive oil
saffron threads
sourdough
star anise
sweet smoked paprika
white chocolate

FISH
hapuku fillet

ALCOHOL
dry sherry

FRESH PRODUCE
brown and red onions
garlic
herbs: flat-leafed parsley, chervil, thyme
red capsicums
Royal Gala apples

STARTER

ROAST GARLIC, WHITE BEAN & BREAD SOUP

20 cloves garlic, peeled and roasted in 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil for 30 minutes in a moderate oven
2 large onions
1 teaspoon thyme leaves
1 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika
1 litre chicken stock
400g can butter beans or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons flat-leafed parsley and chervil leaves
1 cup sourdough croûtons

In a medium saucepan place the oil the garlic was roasted in and the onions. Sauté over a low heat until soft and starting to brown (about 20 minutes). Add the garlic, thyme and paprika then fry for a further minute. Add the stock, bring to a simmer then add the beans. Simmer until the beans are heated through then take off the stove and season well.

Serve the soup and garnish with the parsley, chervil and croûtons.
Wine Verdicchio or Chardonnay – preferably oak aged so it stands up to the garlic.

MAIN

HAPUKU & SAFFRON PAELLA

60ml extra virgin olive oil
800g hapuku fillet, cut into 2cm chunks
2 large red onions, finely diced
2 large red capsicums, cored and finely diced
1 litre chicken stock
1 teaspoon saffron threads
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon sweet smoked paprika
300g calasparra rice
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
flat-leafed parsley to garnish

Heat a paella pan to a medium heat and add the olive oil. Sear the hapuku then remove from the pan and set aside. Add the onions and capsicums to the pan, turn the heat to low and sauté until soft (about 20 minutes).

Meanwhile, in a separate saucepan, bring the stock to the boil and add the saffron. Remove from the heat and leave to steep for 20 minutes.

Add the garlic and paprika to the paella pan. Cook for 1 minute. Add the rice and stir until coated in the oil. Pour in the stock and shake the pan to spread the rice evenly. Season well. Simmer for about 20 minutes or until the rice is tender. Scatter the hapuku over the rice and press into the paella. Cook a further 2 minutes. Take off the stove, garnish with parsley and serve.
Wine Pinot Gris (New Zealand or Alsace) or a good Chardonnay. Both will have strength of flavour but won't railroad the hapuku.

DESSERT

ROYAL APPLE, STAR ANISE & WHITE CHOCOLATE TERRINE

1kg Royal Gala apples, peeled, cored and sliced
1 teaspoon freshly ground star anise
300g white chocolate
50ml cream
10g butter
tart apple syrup to serve

Spread the apples on a baking tray, dust with star anise and bake at 180°C until soft and dried out slightly. Cool.

Combine the chocolate, cream and butter in a bowl then set on a pan of boiling water to melt (or use a double boiler). Mix the apples and chocolate mixture. Arrange layers in a greased loaf tin or terrine mould. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight.

Remove the terrine from the mould (you may need to dip it in hot water to loosen the edges). Slice into 6 portions and serve with apple syrup.
Wine Botrytis Riesling works well.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT

Credits: Room Service soup plate and entrée plate from Nest; Paul Wirths' Schlossburg and Alaska cutlery from The Studio of Tableware; El Cid paella pan from Sabato. For full details, see Credits Index.



tips

- To make the soup a more substantial meal, add chorizo and chard to the saucepan when the onions are sautéing.
- Replace hapuku in the paella with any firm fish or seafood.
- Refrain from stirring the paella once the stock is added; it will cook more evenly if undisturbed. Shake occasionally to prevent sticking.
- The terrine can be made using pears or quince; vary the spice to match the fruit.

leftover bread

Often when buying a good loaf of bread – particularly for a recipe – there will be plenty left over and it can go to waste. Perhaps the most obvious choice is to use it for toast, but there are other good options:

- Grill bread for **crostini** or **bruschetta**. Rub it liberally with garlic and olive oil then add your favourite toppings.
- Tear the bread into thick chunks and use to bulk out a hearty winter **soup** such as ribollita.
- Toss chunks of bread in olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper then toast in the oven until golden. Toss with bitter greens dressed with a piquant dressing and add a few anchovies for a quick **winter salad**.
- Make **breadcrumbs** (either chunky or fine) and freeze for a later use such as crumbing meat or fish. Breadcrumbs are also excellent for adding to meatballs (not only does it bulk out the meat but it also helps keep the meatballs soft).
- Try making a **bread sauce** to accompany a roast chicken. Heat milk with a bay leaf, onion, thyme and a clove or two. Simmer for 10 minutes then pull off the heat and set aside to allow the flavours to infuse. Strain then return to the pan, add a couple of tablespoons of cream, reheat and whisk in breadcrumbs until the mix thickens. Season to taste.
- Cut the bread into small dice and freeze for a later use as **croûtons** to garnish a winter soup. Simply bring out of the freezer when needed and fry in oil or butter until crisp.
- Make a **picada** for Spanish stews. Fry a slice or two of bread in olive oil until crisp then place in a food processor (or, even better, in a mortar and pestle) with smoked Spanish paprika, toasted almonds or hazelnuts, parsley, garlic and olive oil. Purée until smooth. Use to thicken and bind fish and meat dishes – add in the last 5 minutes of cooking.
- Make an eastern Mediterranean **tarator** by soaking fresh breadcrumbs in lemon juice. Put in a food processor and add toasted pine nuts, garlic and enough olive oil to mix to a dressing-like consistency. Serve with fish, over falafel or with tabouli.

■ **GINNY GRANT**



JÖRG LEHMANN/STOCKFOOD/PHOTONEWZEALAND



THE GAME'S AFOOT

Wild meats have come of age, as savvy processors provide gourmet products to an eager market, says **David Burton**


Thar in the Macaulay Valley, Mackenzie Country; opposite page: stag in the Southern Alps

All of a sudden, New Zealanders seem to have acquired a taste for game. Sales have doubled over the past year, says Premium Game, the leading processor for the domestic market.

"It's unreal," says co-founder Allan Spencer, adding that the growth has not been for just venison and wild pork. "We are now selling heaps of rabbits and hares and, where we could hardly sell a single goat when we first started in 1996, now we are processing up to 20 or 30 a week."

As a result, the Blenheim-based company now has 30 hunters working for it, where originally there were only 15.

Another game processor, Fare Game in Invercargill, opened in 2006, and the country has also seen the arrival of specialist game distributors, such as The Game Keeper in Cromwell and Rare Fare in Christchurch.

New Zealanders are well aware of the havoc caused to our wildernesses by introduced wild animals, so eating them has to be about the only instance where pillaging wildlife is actually doing the environment a favour. Game also satisfies modern concerns about provenance. It is by definition organic: the animal has never grazed on pastures dressed with phosphates, or been dosed with serums and drenches. If animals fall ill in the wild, they die, so only healthy beasts are culled – probably by the first and last human they ever see.

All game arriving at a licensed abattoir is examined by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry officials, who look for signs of tuberculosis and other diseases. Spencer estimates that in the entire 14 years of Premium Game, only four or five animals have failed such inspections. However, some animals are discarded for purely culinary reasons. For example, if there is difficulty pulling the skin away from a hare it is a sure sign the animal is old and tough. Spencer's brief to his hunters is never to bring him an animal they wouldn't want to eat themselves – a smelly old billy goat, for example (though some of his Fiji Indian customers have been known to request the stronger meat of billy goats).

For New Zealanders, eating wild animals has to be about the only instance where pillaging wildlife is actually doing the environment a favour

In general, the preference is for younger animals, in prime health. Premium Game doesn't buy stags during the rutting season when they stop eating for weeks on end and lose condition, while Fare Game won't accept a wild pig over 70 kilograms.

Fare Game's main trade is in the meat of the common red deer, which commercial chefs prefer over the much smaller cuts of the fallow deer. The deer are brought in by hunters working in conjunction with three helicopter operators, who scour the mountain tops, river beds and slip areas of Fiordland National Park.

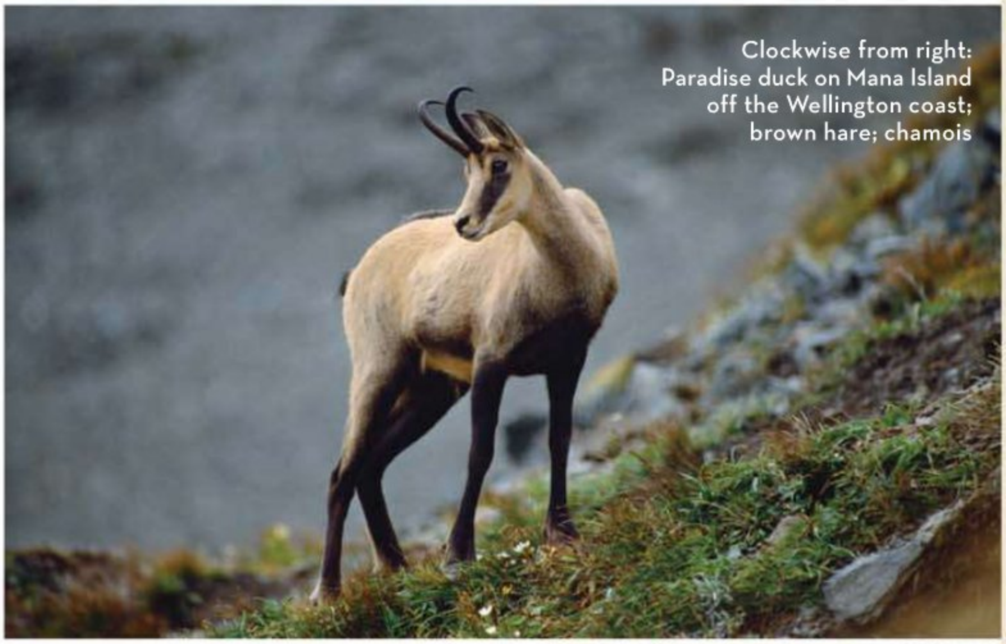
Helicopter deer shooters and venison processing plants have existed since the 1960s; it was the insatiable demand for wild venison that led to the establishment of deer farming. But while the main focus of the wild venison industry remains on export – mainly to Europe and North America – pioneers such as Fare Game and Premium Game sensed a readiness and decided to focus on the domestic market.

While they sell mostly to distributors, both also deal directly with restaurants, which is probably where most game is now consumed. As Spencer points out, there are many European chefs working here with experience of cooking game, and it provides a talking point for customers.

Another reason game is so entrenched on restaurant menus is the annual Monteith's Beer & Wild Food Challenge. From just 12 entrants when it kicked off in the winter of 1997, the competition last year attracted 120 restaurants, all vying to produce the best game match with Monteith's beer.

During the competition, Premium Game sells its wackier products, such as thar and chamois, and whenever the Australians come to play New Zealand at rugby, there is

LEFT: JULIAN APSE/CANVASS; TOP RIGHT: GORDON ROBERTS/PHOTONEWZEALAND



Clockwise from right: Paradise duck on Mana Island off the Wellington coast; brown hare; chamois





the inevitable order for wallaby meat, which is sold on skewers at the games.

However, Spencer believes his company offers a well-presented gourmet product and he can do without the attitude of daring your mates to eat ever more bizarre species of game. His company no longer sets up a stall at Hokitika's Wildfoods Festival, which in his view misses the point, having turned into a boozefest for young people who receive shots of tequila from a drench gun and then show their bravado by swallowing huhu grubs and sandflies.

One of the hurdles for game meat suppliers has been entrenched attitudes – of putting game in the same category as roadkill, or considering it food for peasants. More particularly, there is the perception that game meat is overbearingly strong in flavour.

Fare Game owner Callum Hughes sets up a stall at the Otago Farmers' Market each weekend where he can put the public right in this respect. "Once my customers have tasted my venison, they keep telling me how strong it isn't," he quips.

He thinks the perception wild venison is strong has arisen from how it's handled by some private hunters. "If you treated a farmed deer the same way as a shot deer and dragged it through 10 swamps and 12 rivers and hung it in a tree and got what the flies didn't eat, then that deer would also have a strong gamy flavour."

The beauty of helicopter deer shooting is that the animal is gutted on the spot, then attached to the helicopter and flown directly back to base. It is then put straight into a refrigerated truck (a licensed game-carrying depot) and held there for 96 hours at the most, awaiting the arrival of a MAF official. After inspection, the deer is skinned and the venison hung in a chiller at the plant for seven days to tenderise and mellow the flavour – just as any old-school butcher would do with a side of beef.

There is little flavour variation from the venison of one deer to another, but there is consensus that wild pork tastes of the food the animal has been eating. This may be because venison is very lean, while wild pork usually has plenty of flavour-carrying fat.

If the pig has been eating fern roots, or wallowing about in a swamp, the flesh may take on a slightly medicinal or muddy taint.

However, there are also famous cases of pigs shot on the shoreline of the Marlborough Sounds tasting of the shellfish they had eaten, and Hughes reports that pigs shot in Central Otago can carry the flavour of rosehips. ✪

MISSING INGREDIENTS

THERE ARE TWO glaring omissions from the product lists of our game distributors – game birds and trout. For reasons that are rather quaint and historic, the sale of trout, along with wild ducks, geese, swans, pheasant and quail, is prohibited by law.

Most of these were introduced in the 19th century by settlers for hunting and have been subject to legal constraints ever since. Today Fish & Game New Zealand continues to deny commercial exploitation of the wild populations.

The reason, says its policy manager, Robert Sowman, is the wish to retain the sporting principle of going out and catching it yourself and the belief that you should not be able to make money out of something set up for the purpose of sport. Allowing the sale of trout may well lead to poaching and compromise important tourist resources such as Lakes Tarawera and Rotorua, which are seeded by Fish & Game (Taupo is the responsibility of the Department of Conservation).

However, selling wild paradise duck would surely not dent its populations, as the spread of farmland since European settlement has vastly increased its habitat. Canada geese, too, have proliferated to the extent that farmers regard them as a pest. Regular culls are undertaken on Lake Wairarapa, yet because these birds cannot be sold they are thrown into a large pit and buried.

The only legal way to sidestep the ban on selling game birds is to farm them, which is precisely what happens with ducks, geese, pheasants and quail.

At Canter Valley in North Canterbury, short, plump Japanese quail are barn-raised on commercial feeds. Canter Valley also sells pheasants which, being flighty birds, are difficult to raise and hence expensive.

■ **For game suppliers see page 82.**

BROWN HARE, WARREN LITTLE/GETTY IMAGES; CHAMOIS, GORDON ROBERTS/ PHOTONEWZEALAND; PARADISE DUCK, ROB SUISTED/NATURESPIC



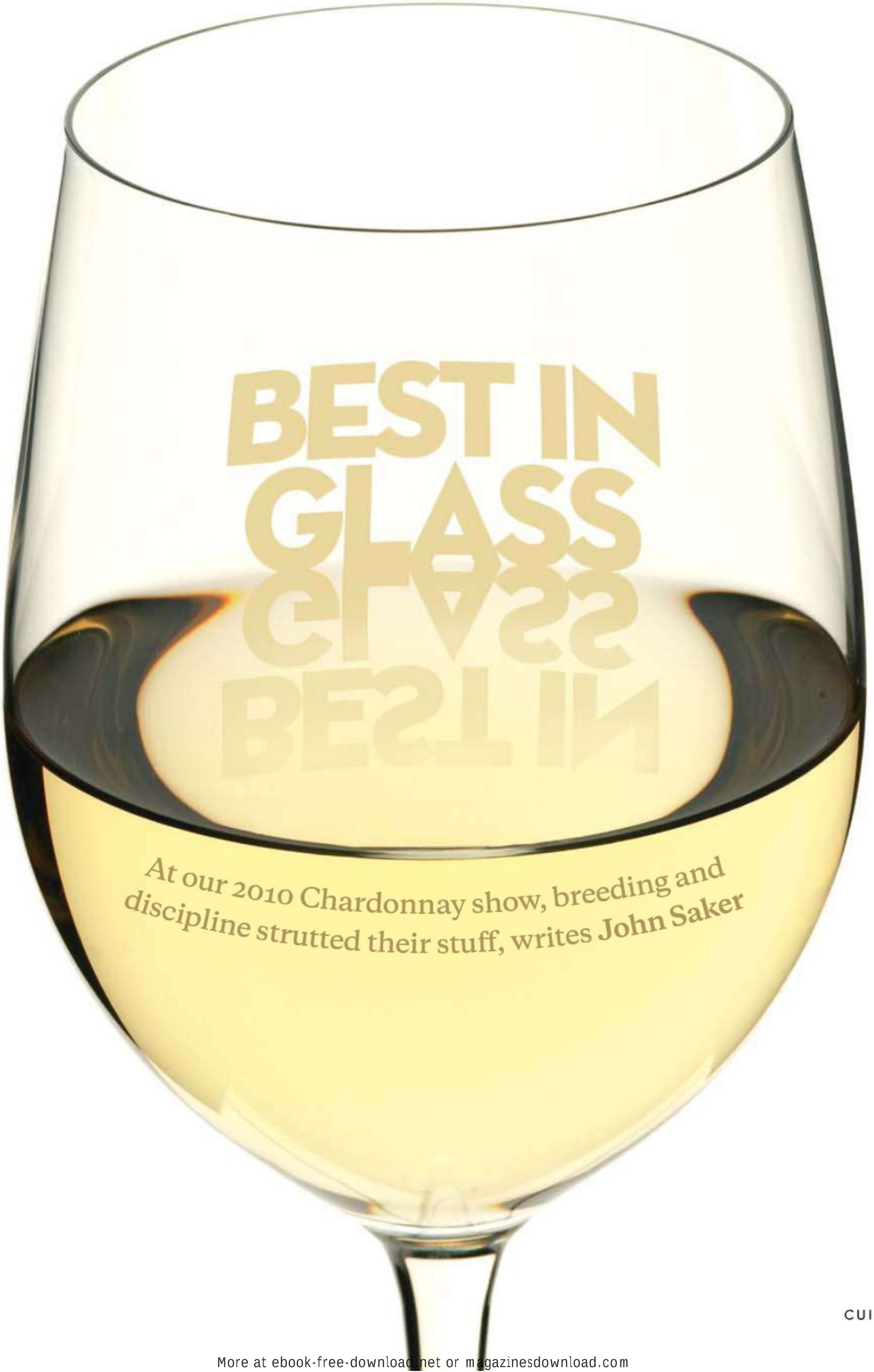












BEST IN GLASS

At our 2010 Chardonnay show, breeding and discipline strutted their stuff, writes **John Saker**

MICK ROCK / CEPHAS PICTURE LIBRARY

THEY JUST KEEP GETTING BETTER

Despite 2008 not being quite as impressive a vintage as 2007, the general upswing in the quality of Kiwi Chardonnay is noticeable. The trail that leads towards fresher, more elegant styles, blazed some time ago by older players, such as Sacred Hill and Kumeu River, has since been taken by many others. Of 183 wines, 45 were awarded four stars or more. That result says New Zealand Chardonnay is relying less on tricks and more on breeding. "Great Chardonnay has a knife-edge balance between finesse, texture and complexity," says panel chair, John Belsham, "and examples of that came through in this tasting."

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	7
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	8
4 STARS VERY GOOD	30
3 STARS GOOD	39
NO AWARD	99
TOTAL	**183**

TOP 10

1. ★★★★★ SACRED HILL RIFLEMANS CHARDONNAY 2007 $50-$53
2. ★★★★★ WEST BROOK BARRIQUE FERMENTED CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95-$22.95
3. ★★★★★ SAINT CLAIR MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $18.95-$20.95
4. ★★★★★ MAN O' WAR CHARDONNAY 2008 $27.99
5. ★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SWAMP RESERVE HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $26-$29
6. ★★★★★ VIDAL RESERVE HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $30.99
7. ★★★★★ MOANA PARK VINEYARD SELECTION CHARDONNAY 2009 $13-$17
8. ★★★★½ WILD ROCK PANIA HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95
9. ★★★★½ VAVASOUR AWATERE VALLEY CHARDONNAY 2008 $21-$26
10. ★★★★½ SOHO CARTER CHARDONNAY 2008 $37.99

BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ MOANA PARK VINEYARD SELECTION CHARDONNAY 2009 $13-$17

★★★★★ SAINT CLAIR MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $18.95-$20.95

★★★★★ WEST BROOK BARRIQUE FERMENTED CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95-$22.95

★★★★½ NOBILO REGIONAL COLLECTION POVERTY BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $16.99

★★★★½ WILDFIRE CHARDONNAY 2009 $14.99-$17.99

★★★★ CROSSROADS WINERY HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $15-$20

★★★★ DASHWOOD MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $12-$18

★★★★ MONTANA CLASSICS GISBORNE CHARDONNAY 2008 $17.95

★★★★ PONDER MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2009 $14.95-$19.95


JOHN BELSHAM


MICHAEL IVICEVICH


SAM KIM


JANE BOYLE

TASTING PANEL

Panel chair, John Belsham, owner of Foxes Island Wines, unleashed a group of experienced Chardonnay "handlers" for this tasting. Michael Ivicevich is chief winemaker for Delegat's, where he oversees the creation of the renowned Oyster Bay range. Senior wine show judge Sam Kim is the author of the subscription-only review publication *Wine Orbit*. Our associate judge was Jane Boyle, product strategy manager at New Zealand Wine Cellars.

LIGHT A MATCH

Many Chardonnay producers want their wine to express a whisper of sulphides - natural compounds often brought on by lees ageing and/or the use of native yeasts. It's thought sulphides give the wine an edgy sophistication and improve its food compatibility. Flavours described as gun flint or struck match are associated with sulphides.

1 TOP NZ CHARDONNAY

5

★★★★★
SACRED HILL RIFLEMANS CHARDONNAY 2007 (HAWKE'S BAY) $50-$53 5-8
A well-chosen site, vine age, a standout vintage, winemaker experience and dedication… together, that spells pedigree. "It has all the hallmarks of a benchmark international Chardonnay," notes John Belsham. A wisp of gun flint and delicate dabs of oak spice and grapefruit subtly play off each other and are carried by a graceful but firm texture. Ageing beautifully, it is rich and full, yet never cloying. A classic Riflemans, pure and complex.



2 ★★★★★ **WEST BROOK BARRIQUE FERMENTED CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $19.95-$22.95** 3-5
BEST BUY
The enticing fresh brioche aromas are disarming. The lush fruit, leaning towards tropical and elegantly oaked, is close to disabling. "Creamy, rounded and very long," says Sam Kim. Bring it out with a creamy fettuccine.

3 ★★★★★ **SAINT CLAIR MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $18.95-$20.95** -4
BEST BUY
This is Chardonnay following a New World script: alive with fruit that is so bouncy and pure it seems at first almost too innocent. The plot thickens when a mealy, more savoury note comes out of the shadows. Try it with a classic veal marsala.





TOP WINE PROFILE

BISH OF THE BAY

Born in the Bay of Plenty, Tony Bish has seen and done plenty since coming to that other large east coast bay province to work a vintage in 1982. And much of his success as winemaker for Hawke's Bay's Sacred Hill winery has come from his Sacred Hill Riflemans Chardonnay.

The Riflemans Vineyard occupies a gorgeous site off Hawke's Bay's beaten track, on a terrace high above putty-coloured cliffs that drop down to the Tutaekuri River, where brown trout bask in the sun-filled eddies.

The vines are closely planted on their own roots. This leaves them exposed to phylloxera, a disease that devastates vine roots, but which also contributes mightily to wine quality, says Tony.

"It gives low vigour and a natural balance in the vine. It all requires very little manipulation and the wine ends up making itself. There are no additives, no sulphur or enzymes – just clear juice that goes straight from press to barrel."

The wine's first vintage was 1995. It was to be called Shotgun before Riflemans, with its native bird association, was preferred. Tony and the Riflemans Vineyard have matured together since he oversaw the wine's first vintage in 1995, but he is in no doubt as to who will outlast whom.

"This is a great site with the right plant material that's proving its worth. We've created something that is generational. It will make great Chardonnay forever… long after I'm gone."

Great Chardonnay has a knife-edge balance between finesse, texture and complexity

CHARDONNAY GOES WITH…

We're hearing the wine lover's phrase "good food style" more and more in regard to Chardonnay.

In general, the lighter, more energetic styles of Chardonnay are the more food-compatible. Plenty of acidity, careful use of oak and more restrained fruit flavours are all part of the recipe for Chardonnay to excel at the table.

Richer, oakier styles often lack the necessary finesse and deliver too many taste distractions. It's a case of less – but it needs to be a well-managed less – being more.

So what are the ideal foods to serve with Chardonnay?

- Shellfish, especially oysters, paua and scallops
- Chicken
- Quail
- Veal
- Pork
- Buttery and creamy sauces
- Roasted vegetables eg potatoes, kumara, carrots and parsnip
- Hard cheeses eg Gruyère
- Mild soft cheeses eg Brie and Morbier
- Pasta with rich cream sauces

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN; WINE TASTERS BY KEN DOWNIE



4½

8 ★★★★½ **WILD ROCK PANIA CHARDONNAY HAWKE'S BAY 2008 $19.95** 1-4
A Chardonnay for those with a liking for opulence. Floral sweetness, a vanillin oak influence and rich stonefruit flavours make strong statements balanced by a fresh vibrancy. Unabashedly mainstream in style and very well made.

4 ★★★★★ **MAN O' WAR CHARDONNAY 2008 (WAIHEKE ISLAND) $27.99** -5
This one is big, the way Jonah Lomu was at his peak: toned, powerful, mesmerising. Layers of toasty oak do not detract from the ripe fruit at the heart of this wine. Bring on the pork belly and crackling. (For more on Man O' War see page 138.)

5 ★★★★★ **COOPERS CREEK SWAMP RESERVE HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $26-$29** -3
"Crisp, fresh, elegant, showing some oak complexity – I love this wine!" notes Michael Ivicevich. It is made in a vibrant style, with a firm spine of acidity. Its affable personality would go gangbusters with coq au vin.

6 ★★★★★ **VIDAL RESERVE HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $30.99** -5
Since becoming Vidal winemaker in 2006, Hugh Crichton has produced some impressive wines, achieving echoes of white Burgundy with this pithy, peppery Chardonnay. It's deftly weighted and gorgeously textured. Pair it with a paella.

7 ★★★★★ **MOANA PARK VINEYARD SELECTION CHARDONNAY 2009 (HAWKE'S BAY) $13-$17** 1-5

BEST BUY

It may be a mere teenager (it's the only 2009 in our Top 10), but it's already sophisticated. Gun-flint aromatics lead to a quietly muscular mouthful, infused with citrus and a hint of earthiness. "An iron fist in a velvet glove," says Michael Ivicevich.

9 ★★★★½ **VAVASOUR AWATERE VALLEY CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $21-$26** 2-5
A rich, complex array of flavours jumps out... hazelnuts, meal, butter, citrus, flintiness. A mouth-coating texture adds interest. There's a lot to like in this feel-good Chardonnay. Enjoy it with roast chicken.

10 ★★★★½ **SOHO CARTER CHARDONNAY 2008 (WAIHEKE ISLAND) $37.99** -5
There was much discussion around this wine. John Belsham describes it as a "sexy, racy, flinty, lights-out Chardonnay... but also polarising". There's Chablis-like austerity to the palate which some wine drinkers will find challenging. Just the ticket with whitebait fritters. [F]



SO FAR, SOHO GOOD

Is the wine industry in crisis? You wouldn't think so talking to the owner of the Soho Wine Company, Rachael Carter. She launched Soho in late 2008, just when local wine oversupply and the global financial crisis were getting acquainted. Soho paid no attention and the brand has only ever been on a growth curve.

"First it was just me, but now I have four staff," says Rachael. "Our problem is we just keep on selling."

This is the Soho formula: well-managed, family-owned vineyards; star contract winemakers who are briefed on the Soho style; and packaging designed to appeal to party-going, wine-loving urbanites. Key inroads have been made in bars and restaurants in Auckland and Queenstown, with Wellington next.

Soho Carter 2008 is the first Chardonnay in the range. It's Rachael's favourite and, yes, it's selling fast.





Plenty of acidity, careful use of oak and more restrained fruit flavours are all part of the recipe for Chardonnay to excel at the table

★★★★½ **KUMEU RIVER MATÉ'S VINEYARD CHARDONNAY 2008 (KUMEU) $50-$55** 🍷 2-6
The vineyard carries the name of Kumeu River pater familias, the late Maté Brajkovich and the wine oozes class. It steps elegantly, leaving a trail of lovely ripe, sweet fruit and toasty, smoky undertones in its wake. An ideal pièce de résistance for any gathering of Chardonnay lovers.

★★★★½ **MAN O' WAR VALHALLA CHARDONNAY 2008 (WAIHEKE ISLAND) $39.99** 🍷 5-7
The 2008 vintage was good for Waiheke Chardonnay generally, very good for Man O' War in particular. This wine is concentrated, deepish in colour ("it flirts with oxidation", notes John Belsham – see Life-Giving Oxygen) and exhibits yellow peach and mirabelle flavours. A refreshing acidity provides balance.

★★★★½ **NOBILO REGIONAL COLLECTION POVERTY BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 (GISBORNE) $16.99** 🍷 BEST BUY
The Nobilo name and the Gisborne region have a long list of vinous achievements. Add to it this softly textured wine in which ripe herbs, apple, tropical fruits and roasted nuts all feature. A poised example offering great value for money. [A]

★★★★½ **WEST BROOK WAIMAUKU ESTATE CHARDONNAY 2008 (WAIMAUKU) $29-$32** 🍷 -6+
This powerful yet crisp and harmonious west Auckland Chardonnay grows in the glass. One judge was taken with the "subtle sulphides", another with the "grapefruity freshness". Perfect with paua.

★★★★½ **WILDFIRE CHARDONNAY 2009 (MARLBOROUGH) $14.99-$17.99** 🍷 2-3 BEST BUY
An interesting green seam, suggestive of apples, limes and celery is endearingly swathed in a lush texture. This easy, elegant wine is perfect for occasions such as casual drinks or picnics. [C]

LIFE-GIVING OXYGEN

Over-exposure to oxygen will turn a glass of wine left out overnight into vinegar. However, some winemakers, especially in Europe, believe the nutty, cooked-apple flavours resulting from controlled dosages of oxidation add to a wine's complexity. (See Man O' War Valhalla 2008 above.)

4



★★★★ BABICH IRONGATE CHARDONNAY 2006 (HAWKE'S BAY) $34-$37 -7
A Chardonnay with a history of quality. This chapter of the Babich Irongate story features a lively interplay between biscuity, bees-waxy sweetness and a more austere mineral note. A very classy wine that couldn't go wrong with raw oysters.

★★★★ CLEARVIEW ESTATE WINERY BEACHHEAD CHARDONNAY 2009 (HAWKE'S BAY) $23-$25 -4
Hawke's Bay wine would be much the poorer without Tim Turvey. At Clearview he continues to make wines that command attention, such as this lovely, lightly toasted, soft-fruited (nectarine) delight. An intense, warmer-climate style.

★★★★ CRAGGY RANGE CHARDONNAY KIDNAPPERS VINEYARD HAWKE'S BAY 2008 $22.95 -5
More a string quartet than a brass band, this wine makes its mark through subtlety and elegance. Spicy, flinty, stonefruit themes are supported by a tight, clean structure. One judge commented on the "Chablisien" balance.

★★★★ CROSSROADS WINERY HAWKE'S BAY CHARDONNAY 2008 $15-$20 -7
BEST BUY
Crossroads Chardonnays have been on an upward quality curve of late. This release matches tarte au citron, white peach and savoury notes to a flowing, almost weightless, texture. Good with food, and good for the bank balance.

★★★★ DASHWOOD MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $12-$18 -2
BEST BUY
The driving minerality that characterises much of the wine from the Awatere Valley comes through in this ripe, refreshing Chardonnay. The texture has real finesse and oak handling adds complexity. A crowd-pleaser to bring out with steamed tuatua.

FATHER KNOWS BEST

The title of father of New Zealand Chardonnay could only be bestowed on one man - Hungarian-born and trained viticulturist/oenologist Denis Kasza. In the early 1950s, when he worked at the Te Kauwhata viticultural research station, he made the country's first known Chardonnay.

However, it seems Kasza was ahead of its time. Even after he left Te Kauwhata and began making quality Chardonnay for McWilliams in the 1960s, support was far from universal.

Keith Stewart reports in his recently published history of New Zealand wine that, although Kasza's wines would sell out to the restaurant trade in a matter of hours in the 1970s, the McWilliams GM at the time maintained "there was no evidence New Zealanders wanted to drink Chardonnay".

★★★★ DOLBEL ESTATE CHARDONNAY HAWKE'S BAY 2008 $29.95-$32 -7
There is a nice old-fashioned feel to this wine. With lashings of fruit and layers of oak, it's generously proportioned and out there, yet harmonious. Ideal with cold crayfish and Thousand Island dressing.

★★★★ ESK VALLEY VINEYARD SELECTION CHARDONNAY 2009 (HAWKE'S BAY) $23.99 -3
The home of one of our great cult red wines, The Terraces, is also home to consistently smart Chardonnays. The fruit is ripe and bountiful, offset against a creamy texture and a fine acidic edge.

★★★★ ESK VALLEY WINEMAKERS CHARDONNAY 2008 (HAWKE'S BAY) $30.99 -5
Gordon Russell has made this in a style true to Hawke's Bay. Alongside flamboyant fruit, a soft milkiness mingles with vanillin oak and an appealing green character. Well made and eminently drinkable.

★★★★ FOSSIL RIDGE CHARDONNAY 2008 (NELSON) $22.50-$25 -7
Fossilised mollusc shells are scattered throughout this vineyard's home slopes. Chardonnay has always enjoyed such calcareous influence; the flavour complexity, silky texture and overall distinction of this wine is a case in point.

★★★★ GOLDWATER MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $18-$21 -2
There was a divergence of views on this wine. Sam Kim enjoyed the toasty, roasted nuts bouquet and impressive palate dimensions. For others there was a question of oak balance. All agreed it would go well with a porcini risotto.



★★★★ GREENHOUGH HOPE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY 2007 (NELSON) $32-$34 -3
Andrew Greenhough and Jenny Wheeler have had a couple of decades to get to know their Hope Vineyard on the southern fringe of the Waimea Plains. It shows in this well-paced wine, which offers lovely pure fruit expression behind a wispy, smoky veil.

★★★★ JACKSON ESTATE SHELTER BELT CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $22.50 5-7
Michael Ivicevich was a big fan. "It is weighty, integrated and beautifully controlled." With good length and moderate complexity, this racy, quite savoury Chardonnay gets you thinking about a delicously soft and crumbling sheep's milk cheese.

THE KUMEU CONNECTION

Few New Zealand wineries are as synonymous with a single variety as Kumeu River is with Chardonnay. The pair first got together in the mid-1960s, but it was not until the early 1980s that they became especially intimate.

Says Michael Brajkovich MW, who led the family-owned winery's rise to Chardonnay prominence, "That was when we began playing around with barrel fermentation and malolactic fermentation." Kumeu River was among the first wineries to produce a single-vineyard expression with the release of the now-famous Kumeu River Maté's Vineyard Chardonnay 1993.

Five Chardonnays are now produced (three single-vineyard wines) and the grape accounts for more than 60 per cent of the winery's output. Five Kumeu River wines were awarded four stars or more in our tasting.

★★★★ KUMEU RIVER CODDINGTON CHARDONNAY 2007 (KUMEU) $43-$48 2-6
The power switch has been flicked... a sweet, juicy urgency grows and rides a wave of flinty sulphides and toast. Sophisticated, firm in structure and the finish is a long stretch indeed.

★★★★ KUMEU RIVER ESTATE CHARDONNAY 2007 (KUMEU) $34-$38 2-6
More delicate and composed than the 2008, and more developed. Hauntingly beautiful, complex and biscuity, it offers hints of nut, peach and flint. Try it with salmon steaks and a creamy dill sauce.

★★★★ KUMEU RIVER ESTATE CHARDONNAY 2008 (KUMEU) $34-$38 2-6
Formerly the Kumeu River Chardonnay, this storied wine remains in the vanguard of New Zealand Chardonnay. The signature flinty, leathery scents have a Burgundian lean. In the mouth there is intensity, energy and sophistication.

★★★★ KUMEU RIVER HUNTING HILL CHARDONNAY 2008 (KUMEU) $43-$48 2-6
The Kumeu River touch is apparent in the flinty, ginger-plant aromatics and the lean, unadorned quality of the wine, which is sheeted to a shimmering acidity. Its classic elegance makes it ideal with grilled fresh fish.

★★★★ MARTINBOROUGH VINEYARD CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARTINBOROUGH) $38-$40 4-6
Paul Mason's Pinots have earned rave reviews, but don't forget his Chardonnay. The tempting aromatics make way for a rich, gorgeous mouthful. Creamy vanilla custard notes are tempered by a mineral edge. Elegance aplenty.



The general upswing in the quality of New Zealand Chardonnay is noticeable

★★★★ MATUA VALLEY JUDD ESTATE GISBORNE CHARDONNAY 2007 $28.95 🍷-3
Company-owned Judd Estate supplies Matua Valley its best Gisborne fruit. This wine shows typical round, toasty, sweet, creamy charm. A strong preserved-lemon flavour provides vivacity. [B]

★★★★ MONTANA CLASSICS GISBORNE CHARDONNAY 2008 $17.95 🍷1-2

BEST BUY

Further evidence of the pride our largest wine producer takes in maintaining the quality of its lower-priced range. This creamy, peach and floral-infused wine has a seamless flow and real fruit purity. For the price, a classic indeed. [E]

★★★★ MUDBRICK VINEYARD RESERVE CHARDONNAY 2008 (WAIHEKE ISLAND) $42-$45 🍷-4
Funky sulphide and white peach, two calling cards of natural yeast ferments, are integral to this Chardonnay. The texture is creamy and elegant, very classy, and the acidity gives lift and freshness. Well crafted and harmonious.

★★★★ PONDER MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2009 $14.95-$19.95 🍷-3

BEST BUY

Plenty to ponder here, starting with the upfront surge of fruit – peaches, melons and crisp apple all taking prominent roles. A biscuity undercurrent adds interest and the flavours persist. Well made and well priced. [D]

★★★★ PONDER OLIVE GROVE MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95-$21.95 🍷-2
This wine provoked lively discussion. Sam Kim enjoyed its rounded opulence and generosity, while John Belsham thought it "put together rather than allowed to come together". Vanillin sweetness and tropical fruit flavours. [D]

★★★★ RAPAURA SPRINGS MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95 🍷-4
Panellists remarked on this wine's "good lines". That is to say it has mobility and direction, and in this case the destination is a "lovely fine finish". Its tropical fruit and vanillin notes would pair well with chicken salad. [G]

★★★★ SAINT CLAIR OMAKA RESERVE CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $30.95-$32.95 🍷-4
This effort by well-travelled winemaker Matt Thomson charmed Jane Boyle, who praised it for having "all the ingredients... it's subtle but distinctive, with lovely length and finesse". Plenty of oak toast and power enrich the palate.

★★★★ SAINT CLAIR PIONEER BLOCK 10 TWIN HILLS CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $27.95-$29.95 🍷1-5
"It's a crowd-pleaser, but it ticks a lot of boxes," says Sam Kim. Plenty of leesy complexity, subtle use of oak, textural richness and an endearing vanilla custard note all have walk-on roles.

★★★★ SAINTS GISBORNE CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95 🍷1-3
The popular Saints range consistently delivers complexity and flavour at a reasonable price. There's plenty of soft, round, ripe fruit and a light toast character in this wine. Serve it as an apéritif with smoked salmon and capers. [E]

★★★★ SHINGLE PEAK RESERVE CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $21.95 🍷-2
Flinty aromatics usher in a tight, quite toasty palate presence. Don't be taken in by the dry austerity... there's a lot going on here. The warm fruit carries the oak with aplomb and a gentle minerality adds complexity. [B]

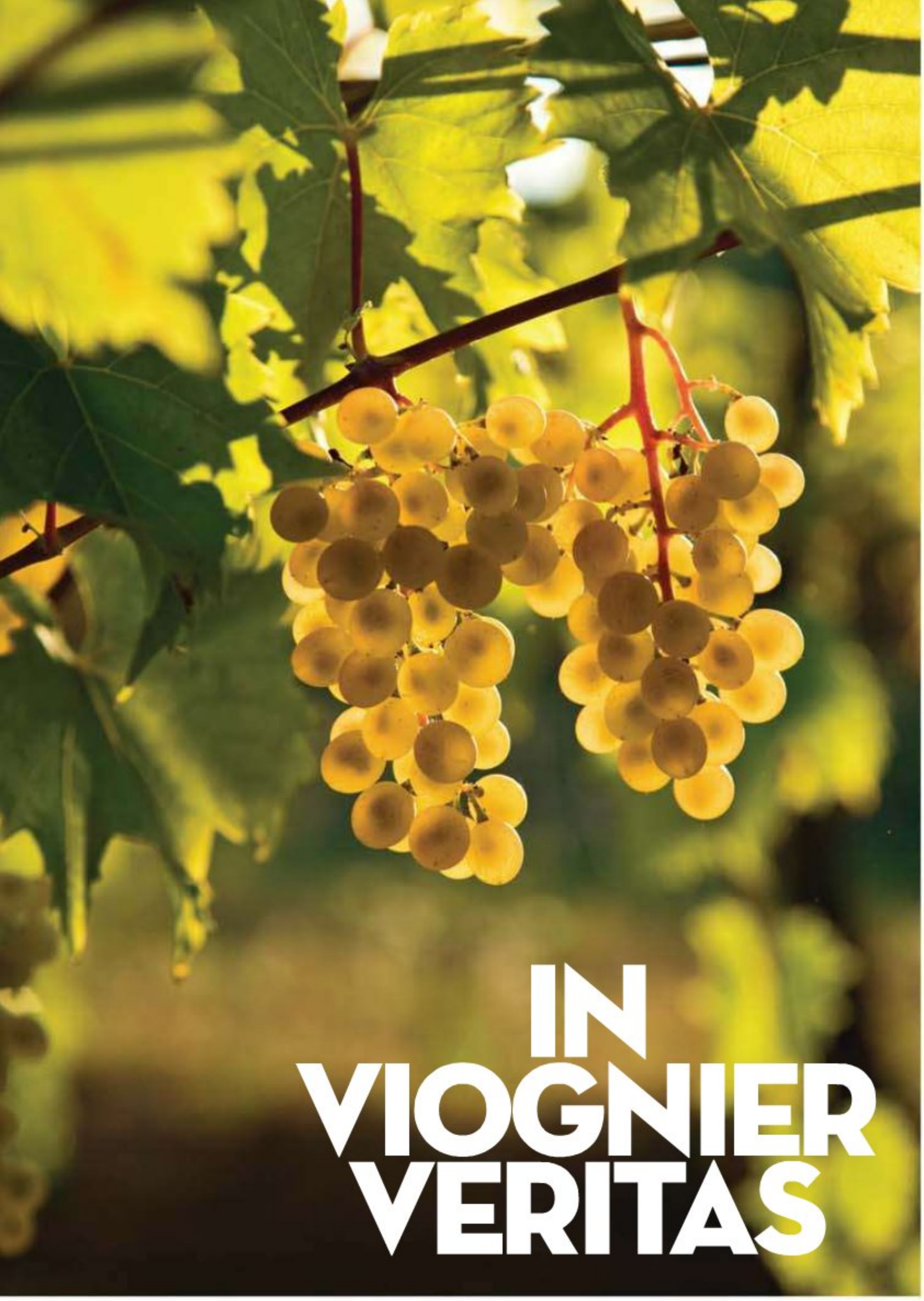
★★★★ SPY VALLEY CHARDONNAY 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $19.90-$22.90 🍷3-5
Like quite a few of us, this wine is bright but not rich. A citrusy vibrancy runs through it, the oak forms a subtle backdrop; a velvety texture supplies comfort and warmth. It would suit a Japanese dish, such as prawn teriyaki.

★★★★ TWO TRACKS MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $19.95 🍷-5
With this release from Wither Hills' second-tier label, Ben Glover delivers plenty of fruit and a beguiling mouthfeel, all brightly varnished with crisp acidity. The wisp of green doesn't detract. An instantly lovable style.

★★★★ VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION MARLBOROUGH CHARDONNAY 2008 $22.99 🍷-3
The Villa Cellar Selection, across all varietals, seldom disappoints. This new release will please wine drinkers who like their Chardonnay turned out in tropical fruit shades, all soft edges, attractively plump. Tastefully put together and very approachable.

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter).
[A] Constellation NZ, ph: 0800-662 456
[B] Foster's NZ, ph: 09-638 2277
[C] Goodbrands, ph: 021-849 176
[D] NZ Wine Society, ph: 0800-809 463
[E] Pernod Ricard NZ, ph: 09-336 8300
[F] Soho Wine Company, ph: 09-360 5443
[G] Spring Creek Vintners, ph: 03-570 2251



IN VIOGNIER VERITAS

TOP 5

1. ★★★★★ KIM CRAWFORD SP TIETJEN VINEYARD GISBORNE VIOGNIER 2007 $33
2. ★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK LIMITED RELEASE GISBORNE VIOGNIER 2009 $15.95-$22.95
3. ★★★★★ MOANA PARK VINEYARD SELECTION DARTMOOR VALLEY VIOGNIER 2009 $13-$17
4. ★★★★½ MORTON ESTATE WHITE LABEL VIOGNIER 2009 $18-$20
5. ★★★★½ VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION HAWKE'S BAY VIOGNIER 2009 $22.99

BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK LIMITED RELEASE GISBORNE VIOGNIER 2009 $15.95-$22.95

★★★★★ MOANA PARK VINEYARD SELECTION DARTMOOR VALLEY VIOGNIER 2009 $13-$17

★★★★ MISSION RESERVE VIOGNIER 2009 $16-$19

Legend has it that the Romans brought Viognier to France in the third century AD. Our panel unearthed a few contemporary classics, writes John Saker

When New Zealand Viognier is good, it's delicious – exotically aromatic, dry in the mouth, full-bodied and a luscious alternative to Pinot Gris and Chardonnay. But when it's not, it can be tired and flabby (often due to winemakers trying to imitate the warm-climate styles from across the Tasman) or – at the other end of the scale – too herbaceous.

It all comes down to getting the balance right in the vineyard, and New Zealand's small band of Viognier producers are getting better at it with every vintage. From a field of 30 wines emerged some Viogniers of distinction, not to mention the feeling that we have much to look forward to with this variety.

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	3
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	2
4 STARS VERY GOOD	2
3 STARS GOOD	10
NO AWARD	13
TOTAL	**30**

Tasting Viognier with John Belsham were Michael Ivicevich, Sam Kim and associate judge Jane Boyle.

1 TOP NZ VIOGNIER

★★★★★

KIM CRAWFORD SP TIETJEN VINEYARD GISBORNE VIOGNIER 2007 $33 2-3

The experienced Kim Crawford has the pick of some fine fruit from Gisborne, as this superb expression demonstrates. A distinctive guava note leads a complex cast of characters – honeyed apple, quince, citrus and spice – all suffused with a soft, rich warmth. The texture is pleasingly viscous. This elegant wine would be delicious alongside a classic canard à l'orange. [A]



TOP WINE PROFILE

CRAWFORD'S VIOGNIER LEGACY

Kim Crawford has left the label that bears his name on something of a Viognier high. The 2007 vintage – his last as winemaker for Kim Crawford Wines – has now earned him two first-place finishes in *Cuisine*'s annual New Zealand Viognier tasting. (His Briant Vineyard 2007 topped our 2008 tasting.)

Both wines were made using Gisborne fruit, which in good years such as 2007, Crawford says, delivers "texture and mouthfeel no other region can match". He points to the stretch on Ormond Rd dubbed the "golden slope" as Gisborne's sweetest spot. It was from here (Paul Tietjen's vineyard to be exact) that fruit for this year's top Viognier was sourced.

"You get the best flavours from the golden slope," he says. "You also get rain and more disease pressure than in other sites, but when it's good, it's brilliant.

"Viognier, like Gewürztraminer, suffers from having a name that is hard to pronounce. However, Viognier has the advantage of being more Chardonnay-ish in flavour and texture. Internationally, we [New Zealand] have to look at more white wine. It's what we do best. That's where new varieties like Viognier come in."

There are critical vineyard decisions to make if Viognier is to show its best side, Crawford says. "Otherwise you can end up with characters that can be offputting. When it's made well, I enjoy drinking Viognier – it's quite food-friendly. With this particular wine, I'd have roast chicken or something similar."

5

2 ★★★★★ **COOPERS CREEK LIMITED RELEASE GISBORNE VIOGNIER 2009 $15.95-$22.95** -2 BEST BUY

"Textbook Viognier," thought Michael Ivicevich. Generous floral aromas – honeysuckle in full bloom – lead the way to a swift, energetic, fleshy surge. Ginger, stone fruit and spice flavours are all present and pristine, lifted by a crisp acidity. A fine partner for a spicy prawn laksa. [B]

3 ★★★★★ **MOANA PARK VINEYARD SELECTION DARTMOOR VALLEY VIOGNIER 2009 (HAWKE'S BAY) $13-$17** -4 BEST BUY

The sheer loveliness of the apricot, nectarine, even some tangerine in this wine seduced the entire panel. A clever balance between acidity and sweetness ensures poise and freshness. It's a wine you could happily serve at occasions from birthdays through to weddings.



> When New Zealand Viognier is good, it's delicious – exotically aromatic, dry in the mouth, full-bodied and a luscious alternative to Pinot Gris and Chardonnay

VIOGNIER GOES WITH...

Since arriving in Condrieu in the Rhône Valley around 1800 years ago (courtesy, it is said, of Roman emperor Probus), Viognier has built a lasting reputation for mouthfilling dry wines with exotic peach and apricot aromas. Sadly, Probus' reward was to be murdered in a vineyard by soldiers who did not share his enthusiasm. We don't know what the Romans and Gauls ate with their Viognier, but today suitable matches are:

- Rich shellfish such as scallops
- Thai fishcakes
- Prawn laksa and other spicy dishes
- Grilled salmon
- Seared tuna
- Sushi
- Poultry dishes
- Cream-based veal dishes
- Chicken

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN; VIOGNIER GRAPES, HENRY GEORGI / CORBIS

4½

4 ★★★★½ **MORTON ESTATE WHITE LABEL VIOGNIER 2009 (HAWKE'S BAY) $18-20** 🍷-5
Dryer and firmer in style, but with no shortage of rose-petal and mandarin-flavoured exuberance, this wine had the panel thinking of tapas hour in a noisy bar, spicy sausage and strong goat's cheese in attendance. A weighty, vibrant mouthful.

5 ★★★★½ **VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION HAWKE'S BAY VIOGNIER 2009 $22.99** 🍷-3
Winemaker Nick Picone perennially produces Villa's Cellar Selection Viognier to a high standard. Sam Kim was taken with this rendition's "power and lusciousness". A prominent gun-flint note sparked discussion as to whether it helped the focus or detracted from the aromatics.

4

★★★★ **ALPHA DOMUS THE WINGWALKER VIOGNIER 2008 (HAWKE'S BAY) $22.95** 🍷-2
In this wine the gently caressing, creamy texture that Viognier can do so well is harnessed to deep, concentrated fruit that offers a fascinating sweet-cum-funky profile. Jane Boyle enjoyed the "sophisticated use of oak". Uncork a bottle with a stir-fry, complete with almonds and noodles.

★★★★ **MISSION RESERVE VIOGNIER 2009 (HAWKE'S BAY) $16-$19** 🍷-3

BEST BUY

This wine cuts a dash. Confident, pure fruit expression throws out classic Viognier flavours – floral and stone fruit – and the structure is well managed. Gentle oak treatment has deepened the colour and added a vanilla note. A great match for rock melon and prosciutto.



> Since arriving in France's Rhône Valley 1800 years ago, Viognier has built a reputation for mouthfilling dry wines with exotic peach and apricot aromas

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter).
[A] Constellation NZ, ph: 0800-662 456
[B] NZ Wine Society, ph: 0800-809 463

TASTE OUR TOP WINES

Taste our latest star-rated wines at the following fine-wine stores.

AUCKLAND

First Glass Wines & Spirits
Ph: 09-486 6415
first-glass.co.nz
Wed 28 April 7pm
$15 (no bookings)

Glengarry Victoria Park
Ph: 0800-733 505
glengarry.co.nz
Sat 8 May
12pm-4pm (free)

La Barrique
Ph: 09-638 5000
Fri 30 April and Sat 1 May 4pm-6pm
$10 (redeemable if *Cuisine* wines purchased on either night)

Waiheke Wine Centre
Ph: 09-372 6139
waihekewinecentre.co.nz
The Goldie Room at Goldwater Estate
Thu 20 May 6.30pm
Bookings essential

HAMILTON

Hamilton Wine Company
Embargo Restaurant
Ph: 07-839 1190
Tues 4 May 7pm
$15 (book ahead)

HAVELOCK NORTH

Advintage
Ph: 06-877 9754
advintage.co.nz
Fri 7 May
3pm-5.30pm (free)

WELLINGTON

Glengarry Thorndon Quay
Ph: 04-472 7051
glengarry.co.nz
Sat 8 May
12pm-4pm (free)

CHRISTCHURCH

Vino Fino
Ph: 03-365 5134
vinofino.co.nz
Tues 4 May 6pm

TASTING NOTES

★★★★★
Outstanding quality

★★★★½
Excellent quality

★★★★
Very good quality

★★★
Good quality (website listings only)

Drink now, don't cellar

Drink now or cellar for up -2 to two years from now

Not ready for drinking yet

Tasting method All wines are tasted blind. If, after discussion, the tasters do not agree on a star rating, the wine will receive the rating given by the majority but dissenting comments will be included in the wine notes. The scores of winemaker judges cannot exceed those of other judges.

Availability All wines entered in *Cuisine* tastings must be readily available at the time of publication. However, high demand and a six-week lead time between tastings and publication can affect availability. If you cannot find the wines, contact the winery or distributor direct.

Prices Suppliers are asked to provide a retail price range for all wines entered in tastings. Prices do vary between vineyard and low-to-high volume outlets and cannot, therefore, be guaranteed. All prices are quoted in $NZ.

Recommended by *Cuisine* stickers Look for these top wines as your guarantee of quality.

Gold sticker Wines awarded five stars can wear the gold five-star Recommended by *Cuisine* sticker.

Burgundy sticker Wines awarded 4 1/2 and four stars can display the familiar burgundy Recommended by *Cuisine* sticker.

man o' war
the voyage so far...

The largest wine producer on Waiheke Island is plotting an intriguing course, reports **John Saker**





Not all wine producers have great stories to tell, but in the case of Waiheke Island's Man O' War, there's a rattling good yarn at every turn.

The name itself goes back to Cook's circumnavigation of New Zealand in the 18th century. The explorer advised the Admiralty that the magnificent kauri stands on Waiheke could be a rich source of masts and spars for the Royal Navy. A naval wood and water station was later set up at a beach on the eastern side, today known as Man O' War Bay. An unproven tale has it that the masts on *HMS Victory* at Trafalgar were of Man O' War Bay kauri.

As in other regions, ancient forests gave way to farmland. One of the country's wealthiest families entered the picture in the late 1970s when John Spencer began buying land on Waiheke, eventually acquiring the island's north-eastern peninsula, which became Man O' War farm.

The farm was a magnet for John's two children, daughter Mertsi and son Berridge. Many happy childhood days were spent on the island and it became a patch with strong emotional ties for both. It's easy to see why. A shoreline of rugged rock punctuated by small golden beaches; the strange boulder-strewn paddocks and old gun emplacements of Stony Batter; a bird-filled parcel of regenerating kauri and nikau palm; an absence of people... it's a place layered in beauty, seclusion and mystery.

Waiheke's reinvention as "Cabernet isle" in the 1980s did not go unnoticed by the Spencers. In 1993, their friend and neighbouring vigneron Kim Goldwater was enlisted to help in the planting of an experimental vineyard. Experimental was the operative word. For several years indifferent wine was made under the Stony Batter label.

On the positive side, a hungry young viticulturist from Gisborne had been hired who was captivated by the terroir with which he was working. Matt Allen is now closing in on 20 vintages for the Spencers.

From 2000, everything changed. Mertsi and Berridge were handed the reins of the family investments and began planning a Waiheke wine reinvention of their own. Berridge had been living in California where he was drawn to the elegant Bordeaux blends and Chardonnays grown on the higher, cooler, sloping sites in Sonoma. That, he thought, is what can be done on Waiheke.

From the air, they look like a carelessly dropped deck of cards, though each site has been carefully selected for aspect and slope

"The aim is to develop hillside vineyards producing wine that, one day, will stand alongside the classics of the world," he states.

The bold vision has been backed up by bold action. The planting carried out since 2000 has not only created Waiheke's largest wine property, but also one of the country's most astonishing. More than 90 blocks of different shapes and sizes are spread across the vast acreage. From the air, they look like a carelessly dropped deck of cards, though each site has been carefully selected for aspect and slope. The Mosel-like steepness of some has led to vineyard names like Madman's and Asylum. To call the estate viticulturally challenging would be an understatement.

"Everything has to be done by hand, one row at a time," says Allen. "So there is a tight window of opportunity for every task. And just moving staff and machinery around all the sites can be a mission."

The pummelling effect of the island winds has been negated by shelter belts, many planted in native karo. Bordeaux varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot) and Syrah have been planted in hot pockets lower down the slopes; for whites like Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, more elevated, cooler, south-facing sites have been chosen.

The Pinot Gris is grown on nearby Ponui Island, which presents another logistical headache as "the world's only vineyard where the harvest is dictated by the tide", sighs Allen.

In 2006, the new Man O' War branding was unveiled. The nautical theme sat comfortably with the Spencers; they are keen sailors and a grandfather was a youthful Royal Navy skipper in World War I. Wine names such as Dreadnought Syrah celebrate an early British battleship.

The quality gauge has responded to the investment in effort and money. With the 2007 vintage, the bar was raised enough, says Berridge, "for us to go out and get the best young New Zealand winemaker we could find".

Duncan McTavish, formerly of Waipara Springs, is now completing his second full vintage at Man O' War. "No, I'm not missing Pinot," he says. "There's an excitement on Waiheke right now that our Syrah can be special." Watch this deck space.

See page 126 for Man O' War's star Chardonnay tasting results

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERENCE STEVENS-PRIOR

NEW!

Lupi Essenza

Extra Virgin Olive Oil from Pitted Olives



2000 years ago, an exclusive oil was prepared for the nobility by cold-pressing just the tender flesh of the olive without the hard pit. Pressing olives without the pit produces an Extra Virgin Olive Oil that is low in acidity, rich in flavour and naturally high in the polyphenols and antioxidants that give Extra Virgin Olive Oil its characteristic health benefits. Lupi Essenza is the newest product in the Lupi family, prepared using this centuries-old technique.

Lupi Essenza is pressed from pitted olives for:

- ✓ Maximum health benefits
- ✓ Maximum quality
- ✓ Maximum flavour

Two summer recipes from Lupi

- **Create a delicious summer salad dressing from 2 parts Lupi Essenza and 1 part Lupi White Balsamic Vinegar with a spoonful of chunky basil pesto to add texture.**

- **Toast slices of crusty white bread, rub with garlic and sprinkle with Lupi Essenza. Finish with sliced tomatoes and fresh basil for delicious bruschetta, ideal for summer entertaining.**

Imported and distributed by William Aitken & Co Ltd

travel

Edited by Susan Buchanan



Waiheke Island

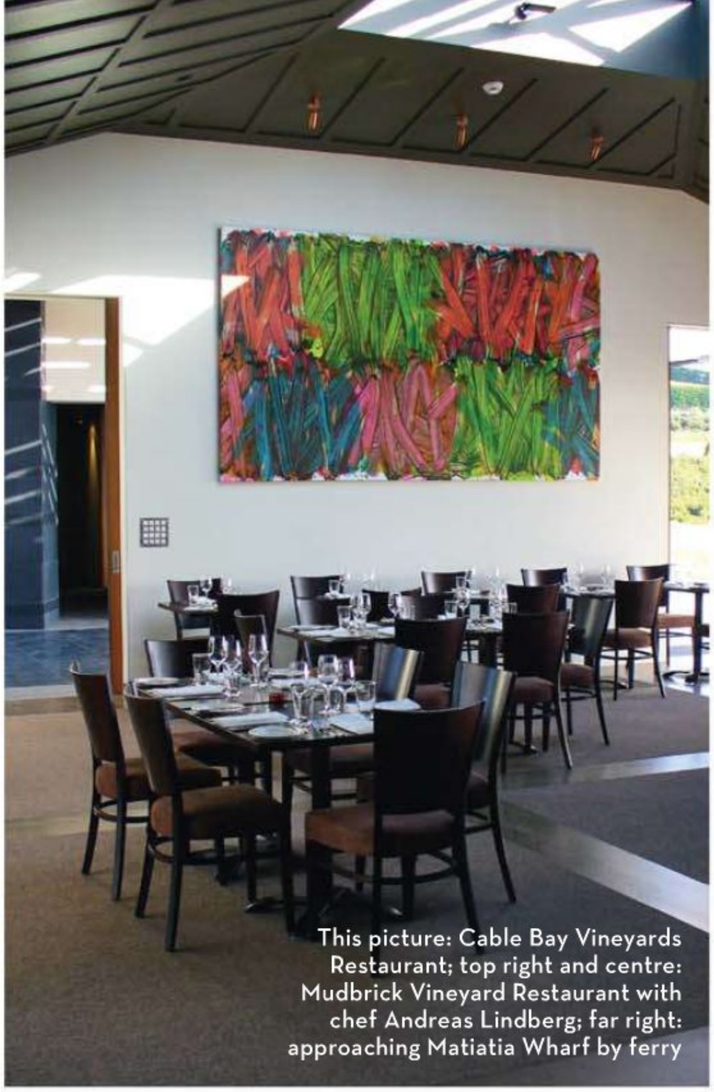
KIERAN SCOTT/CANVASS

treasure island

Whether you want to eat, drink or simply stock your larder, Waiheke Island has it all, just a short ferry ride from Auckland. **Lauraine Jacobs** updates the food and wine trail



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEN DOWNIE



This picture: Cable Bay Vineyards Restaurant; top right and centre: Mudbrick Vineyard Restaurant with chef Andreas Lindberg; far right: approaching Matiatia Wharf by ferry







When Captain Cook sailed into Waiheke Island's Man O' War Bay in 1769, ancient kauri trees dominated the hillsides. These days island visitors also arrive by boat, but vines now reign supreme in this Hauraki Gulf sanctuary less than an hour by ferry from downtown Auckland or Half Moon Bay to the east. Day trippers come for a lazy vineyard lunch, others to explore for longer. Waiheke long ago shrugged off its mystique as an island retreat for those escaping urban pressures. It is now an exciting destination, its relaxed island charm recognised by tourists worldwide. With a growing food scene and fine feasting in restaurants, cafés and wineries, the island is also home to an active arts community, unspoilt beaches and many scenic walks.

DINE

Much of the best eating is in the winery restaurants over summer, when visitors are most likely to descend on the island. Seasonal hours apply and bookings are advised.

Cable Bay Vineyards

After time spent recently at Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant in Padstow, head chef William Thorpe has revamped the seafood side of the menu and also champions local produce. Enjoy his dishes in this state-of-the-art winery with spectacular sea views and contemporary art. Moreish snacks are served in the wine bar when the restaurant is open for lunch.
12 Nick Johnstone Drive, Church Bay, ph: 09-372 5889, cablebayvineyards.co.nz

Casita Miro

Now housed in a new airy pavilion in the style of Spanish outdoor markets, Casita Miro offers a daily changing tapas menu, with wines including those from its own vineyard. Lunch Wednesday to Sunday and dinner Friday to Saturday, with a winter arts programme (including opera evenings) planned. Bookings essential.
Miro Vineyard, 3 Brown Rd, Onetangi, ph: 09-372 7854, mirovineyard.co.nz

Kennedy Point

For a truly restful lunch stop, close to the SeaLink ferry wharf, international Syrah star Kennedy Point offers smartly arranged platters at weekends on a deck shaded by magnificent pohutukawa.
44 Donald Bruce Rd, ph: 09-372 5600, kennedypointvineyard.com

Mudbrick Vineyard Restaurant

Open daily all year for lunch and dinner, the Mudbrick dining room opens to terraces with breathtaking views. Swedish chef Andreas Lindberg (ex-Aria, Sydney) offers a seasonal menu drawing on local produce and the herbs, vegetables and edible flowers in the signature kitchen-garden potagers.
126 Church Bay Rd, ph: 09-372 9050, mudbrick.co.nz

Passage Rock Wines

A little off the beaten track, Passage Rock Wines offers the best family-style dining on Waiheke. Parents of young children, David and Veronika Evans Gander provide a play area and plenty of shady spots. Delicious pizzas and casual food. Closed in July.
438 Orapiu Rd, ph: 09-372 7257, passagerockwines.co.nz

CABLE BAY VINEYARDS, JEREMY BURN



This picture: Boat sheds at Rocky Bay; top right: Te Whau Vineyard Restaurant and its Paddle Crab Salad entrée (right); far right: Casita Miro







Poderi Crisci
The long-awaited Italian restaurant at Poderi Crisci will open late April/early May, with light food at weekends and monthly long lunches. Full seven-day menus and an Italian farmers' market in the vineyard are planned from October.
205 Awaawaroa Rd, ph: 09-372 2148, podericrisci.co.nz

Te Whau Vineyard Restaurant
High on the Te Whau Peninsula, the restaurant at Te Whau Vineyard has kept standards high since opening 10 years ago. A splendid list of local and international wines, including Te Whau's own, is offered to match the New Zealand/Pacific rim cuisine of Marco Edwardes.
218 Te Whau Drive, ph: 09-372 7191, tewhau.co.nz

The Goldie Room
Under Jason Schwarz and his exec chef wife, Christine, the team at The Goldie Room at Goldwater Estate now serves casual, seasonal lunches Thursday to Saturday, and Monday dinners, when revolving menus are likely to include a braised meat night, pork and Pinot night, and more. The monthly Great Long Lunch will continue. The tasting room serves tapas, as well as platters when the Goldie Room is open.
18 Causeway Rd, Putiki Bay, ph: 09-372 7493, goldwaterwine.com

The Shed at Te Motu
This hidden spot in a rustic shed opens to a courtyard amid the vines. Excellent dining at lunch and dinner from the contemporary menu.
76 Onetangi Rd, ph: 09-372 6884, temotu.co.nz

Veranda Café at Stonyridge
This well-loved destination offers a lunch menu of contemporary dishes. From the deck overlooking the olive groves and vineyard, you would swear you were in the Tuscan hills.
80 Onetangi Rd, ph: 09-372 8822, stonyridge.co.nz

Away from the wineries, evening dining choices are somewhat limited. Here are some favourites.

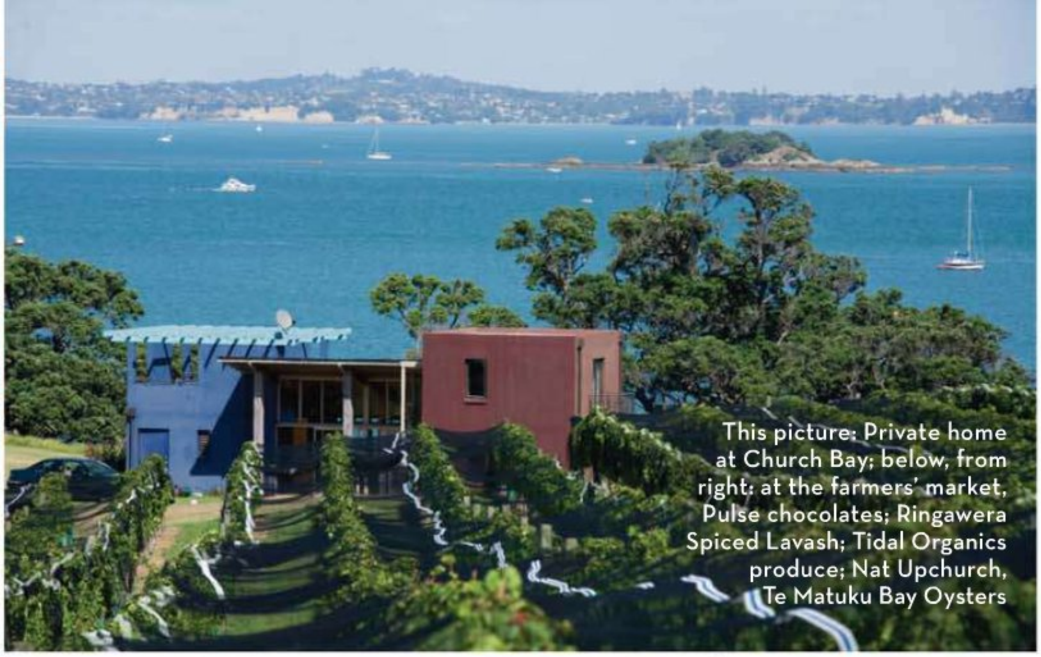
Stefano's Pizzeria
Delicious thin-crust pizzas are the speciality here.
18 Hamilton Rd, Surfdale, ph: 09-372 5309

Te Whau Lodge
Liz Eglinton and Gene O'Neill's new "One Table, No Menu" dinner-party dining option allows you to book Thursday to Saturday to join lodge guests from 7pm for canapés, main plate and dessert, all of chef O'Neill's choosing. The seasonal dishes change daily.
36 Vintage Lane, Te Whau Point, ph: 09-372 2288

Thymes Tables
Above the Island Thyme Deli, chef-owner, Carl Phiskie, has made the bold move of offering just one entrée, one main and one dessert each evening he is open (Thursday to Saturday).
8 Miami Ave, Surfdale, ph: 09-372 3400

For coffee and other casual eating, head to **Nourish** (Ostend), or Oneroa haunts **Spice**, **Lure Café** (don't miss breakfast) or **Lazy Lounge** (where it is rumoured Lenny Henry holds court when he's on the island).





This picture: Private home at Church Bay; below, from right: at the farmers' market, Pulse chocolates; Ringawera Spiced Lavash; Tidal Organics produce; Nat Upchurch, Te Matuku Bay Oysters







SHOP

Waiheke Island Farmers' Market

The new Sunday farmers' market offers items such as Two Fat Birds gourmet vinegars and verjus; Waiheke Island Cheese Company's sheep's milk cheeses; Lemon Wedge Moon's preserved lemons and lemon chutney; lamb from Waiheke Fresh Meats; and more. Also under way are a commercial kitchen and wholefoods takeaway.

7 Belgium St, Ostend, Sun 10am-1pm, marketground.co.nz/fmnzwaiheke

Ostend Market

Look for Matthias Kroeger's organic Helios range of dark breads and Jenny's Kitchen chutney and preserves at this eclectic Saturday market.

Sat 8am-12pm, Ostend Rd, ostendmarket.co.nz

Attitude Foods

Demand for the Waiheke-born Attitude Foods handmade range of gourmet condiments has not waned under new ownership. Find their infused oils, organic dukkah, mustard, mayonnaise and roasted vegetable spice throughout the island.

Ph: 09-405 1919, attitudefoods.com

Baked on Waiheke

At this tiny shop, Derek Moss (ex-Auckland's European bakery Diehl's and later the Culinary Institute of America) bakes a selection of breads Wednesday to Sunday. His ciabatta and sourdough are excellent (slow-risen and full of flavour with chewy crusts). He also bakes lovely pastries and it pays to order ahead.

30 Belgium St, Ostend, ph: 09-372 2414

Fresh fish from the wharf

Early queues at Matiatia on Friday mornings are not just for the ferry. Commercial fisherman Terry Gallon sells freshly caught snapper, tarakihi, John Dory and gurnard (dependent on the catch) direct from the wharf from 9am-12pm.

Gulf Providore

Look for Te Whau Lodge chef Gene O'Neill's signature honey-roasted muesli, as well as his house-made hummus (with lemon, coriander and basil) and tapenade, all under the Gulf Providore label.

Island Thyme Deli

As well as keeping up with an unprecedented demand for handmade pies and other deli staples, including take-home meals, Island Thyme now offers a pick-up catering service for canapés/finger food, lunch items, salads and sweets. Open daily.

8 Miami Ave, Surfdale, ph: 09-372 3400, islandthyme.co.nz

Olive oils

Waiheke's olive oils tend to be highly perfumed and full of flavour. Rangihoua Estate offers tastings and grove tours, while at Azzuro Groves, Kerry and Berni Hart sell their own native bush honey and garments handmade from the fleece of their alpaca herd, alongside their varietal oils.

Azzuro Groves
152 Te Whau Drive, ph: 09-372 2700, azzurogroves.com
Rangihoua Estate **1 Gordons Rd, Rocky Bay, ph: 09-372 6214**

Ringawera Lavash

Repeat *Cuisine* Artisan Award winner (in 2010 for his Ringawera Spiced Lavash; in 2009 for the sesame seed

MARKET PHOTOGRAPHS, MINKA FIRTH; OPPOSITE: TE WHAU VINEYARD RESTAURANT, DAVID WHITE; CASITA MIRO, DENIS LA TOUCHE

version), Patrick Griffiths' new work space includes a commercial kitchen and Pacific-inspired leather studio and art gallery. Here he bakes and sells his delicious paper-thin, unleavened flatbread and displays his carved leather goods, also for sale. Try the new nougat blanc made with his own manuka blend of honey and local macadamias.
104A Te Whau Drive, ph: 09-372 2002 (call to confirm weekend opening times), ringawera.com

Te Matuku Bay Oysters
Duana and Nat Upchurch raise the fat, sweet Te Matuku Bay oysters in baskets, which gives an unusual rounded edge to the shell. Buy in the shell or shucked at the factory shop, which also stocks fresh fish, Coromandel smoked seafood and Waiheke artisan foods. Takeout soup in winter.
13 Tahi Rd, Ostend, ph: 09-372 8600, tematukubayoysters.co.nz

Waiheke Fruit & Veg
Don't miss Emily McDonald's superb store – a kaleidoscope of Waiheke under the one roof with shelves and fridges crammed with the specialities of local artisan producers. She also sources terrific fresh fruit and veges.
110 Ocean View Rd, Oneroa, ph: 09-372 8866

Waiheke Herbs
Long-time resident Wendy Kendall's fresh herb mixture is a must for the store cupboard. Her bright green Waiheke Island Herb Spread is made from 12 year-round herbs with fine Waiheke Island olive oil as a base – ideal on pizzas, crackers and savoury muffins or in pasta and rice dishes.
waihekeherbs.co.nz

DRINK
Waiheke's Bordeaux-style reds were first to capture the world's imagination, but more recently, Syrah has taken hold. Most wineries offer cellar-door tastings. Call for seasonal opening hours and check winery listings under Dine.

Man O' War
A quirky, beachfront cellar door sells Man O' War wine, olive oil and pohutukawa honey over the summer in Man O' War Bay. Access by car or boat. (For more on Man O' War see page 138.)

Obsidian
In a rustic setting looking out over the vines, sample the wines made at this boutique vineyard under the Obsidian and Weeping Sands labels. Visitors are welcome to picnic.
Te Makiri Rd, Onetangi, ph: 09-372 6100, obsidian.co.nz

Peacock Sky
The new Peacock Sky has opened for tastings, food and wine pairings from former chef and co-owner, Connie Festa, plus nature walks and take-your-own picnics.
The Tasting Room, ph: 021-300 387, peacocksky.co.nz

Poderi Crisci
The tasting room is open daily. Always on hand to accompany the wines are Italian cheeses, cured meats, fresh garden produce and Podere Crisci olive oil.
205 Awaawaroa Rd, ph: 09-372 2148, podericrisci.co.nz

Waiheke Wine Centre
This *Cuisine* Top Ten store stocks a great range of local wines, offers daily tastings and also acts as the cellar door for The Hay Paddock's Rhône-style Syrahs.
153 Ocean View Rd, Oneroa, ph: 09-372 6139, waihekewinecentre.co.nz

STAY

Lavender Hill
lavenderhill-luxury.com

Te Whau Lodge
tewhaulodge.co.nz

The Boatshed
boatshed.co.nz

Waiheke Unlimited
Private luxury houses for rent. waihekeunlimited.co.nz

EXPLORE

Walkways on Waiheke
For details pick up a guide at the i-SITE centre.
2 Korora Rd, Oneroa, ph: 09-372 1234, waihekenz.com

Te Whau Garden & Gallery
Walk through gardens studded with artworks.
31 Vintage Lane, Te Whau Rd, ph: 09-372 6748, tewhaugarden.co.nz

Waiheke Community Art Gallery
2 Korora Rd , Oneroa, ph: 09-372 9907, waihekeartgallery.org.nz

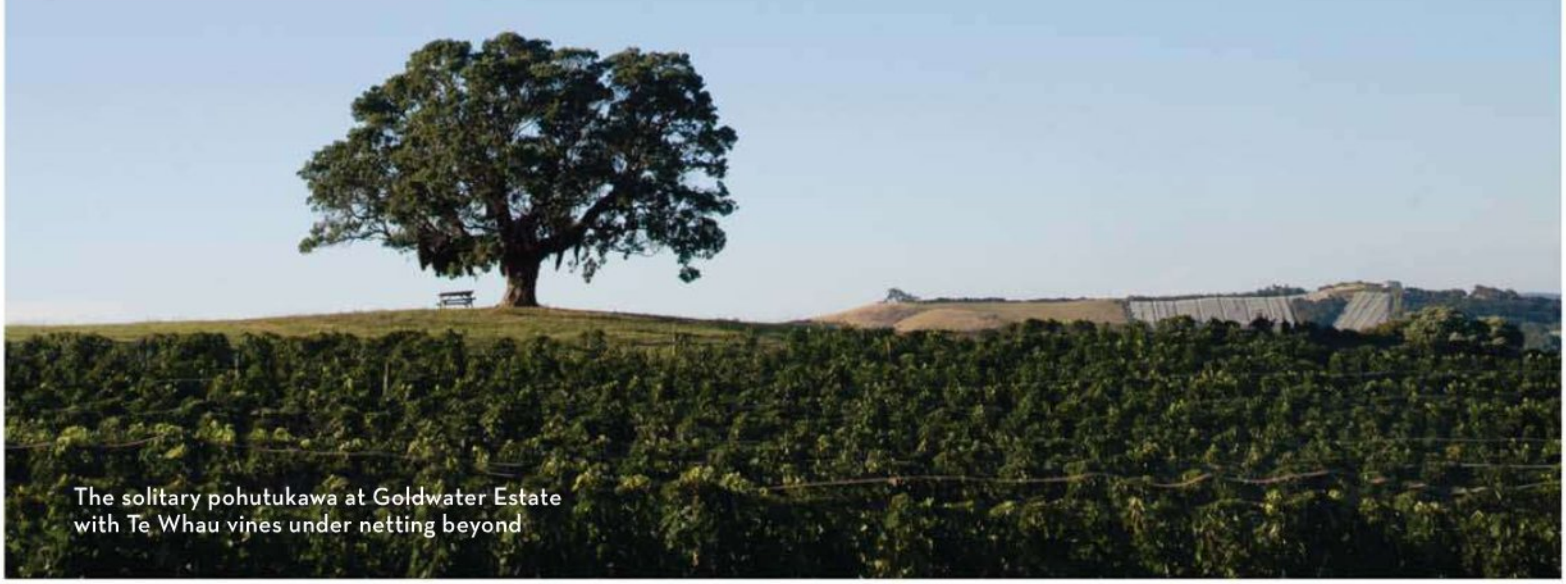
Whittaker's Musical Museum
Lloyd and Joan Whittaker hold a 1pm concert each Sat.
2 Korora St, Oneroa, ph: 09-372 5573

Wild on Waiheke
A multi-experience centre and home to the Waiheke Island Brewery.
82 Onetangi Rd, ph: 09-372 3434, wildonwaiheke.co.nz

SeaLink's passenger and car ferry service sails from Auckland's Half Moon Bay. **Ph: 09-300 5900, sealink.co.nz**

Fullers ferries go to Matiatia from Quay St, Auckland. **Ph: 09-367 9148, fullers.co.nz**

tourismwaiheke.co.nz
waiheke.co.nz
waihekewine.co.nz



The solitary pohutukawa at Goldwater Estate with Te Whau vines under netting beyond



Baking Classic

Chocolate Cake

Try this flourless variation on this this age old classic.

- 125g butter, chopped coarsely
- 250g dark chocolate, chopped coarsely
- 5 eggs, separated
- 230g caster sugar
- 250g ground almond meal

Chocolate Ganache

- 250g dark chocolate, chopped coarsely
- 125ml cream

1. Preheat oven 180°c fan forced. Grease and line 22cm round cake pan with baking paper.
2. Place butter and chocolate in medium heatproof bowl, over medium saucepan of simmering water, cook, stirring, until combined; cool slightly.
3. Meanwhile, whisk yolks and sugar in small bowl with an electric mixer until thick and creamy. Transfer to a large bowl with chocolate mixture and almond meal, stirring until combined.
4. Whisk egg whites in large bowl of an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Using metal spoon gently fold egg whites into chocolate mixture, in two batches, until combined.
5. Pour cake batter into prepared cake pan. Bake in oven about 1 hour and 30 minutes or until cooked through. Stand cake in pan 5 minutes before turning onto wire rack to cool.
6. Combine cream and chocolate in small saucepan, stirring, until combined, cover refrigerate until set. Spread chocolate ganache over cake.

Makes 8
Preparation 30 minutes
Cooking time 1 hour 20 minutes



Xi Yan



Chef Wong Xiaoqiong of Da Ping Huo

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Ray McVinnie delves into the world of Hong Kong's private kitchens



Da Ping Huo



Xi Yan

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EARL WAN; XI YAN IMAGES, APART FROM THE RICE-PADDY-GREEN SILK CURTAINS, COURTESY OF XI YAN


Xi Yan

Hong Kong's mainstream restaurants are typically big, expensive and opulent, partly to counteract the city's high compliance costs with economies of scale. There is, however, an entirely different option, the private kitchen.

Private kitchens, dining clubs and underground restaurants are not unknown in the world's leading cities. They tend to operate on limited hours and are often run by keen cooks who want to make some extra money or flex their culinary muscles in a semi-professional way. In Rome, I was taken to some otherwise elusive examples serving traditional Italian food. But such places, I was told, generally were a dying breed.

It is said that Hong Kong's private kitchens began as a way to avoid compliance costs, but that hardly applies these days, and fire and hygiene regulations are enforced whether the kitchen be private or public. It is more a case of bucking a strict cultural stereotype of what a restaurant should be. Usually small – the largest I saw seated only 30 – private kitchens serve household European or Asian dishes, or the chef's own take on these.

And they have definitely found their niche. One of my favourites, cooking contemporary Sichuan and Shanghai household dishes, Yellow Door Kitchen is now 10 years old.

Many private kitchens are owned by chefs who serve the food that interests them or by artists or cooks nostalgic for other cultures. Many do not advertise but rely on word of mouth or the internet to attract their fiercely loyal followings.

The premises are not in prime spots (high-rise upper floors are favoured) and may not even be signed. Menus change frequently, in contrast to mainstream, particularly Chinese, Hong Kong restaurant practice. Set menus of daily specials are the norm and prices range across the board. Décor styles are diverse: some have the feel of a family living room; others sport glamorous designer fit-outs.

Many private kitchens are owned by chefs who serve the food that interests them or by artists or cooks nostalgic for other cultures

Patrons do not line up for a table outside, as is usual for mainstream Chinese restaurants, but make reservations – essential at these intimate, exclusive eateries. Expats enjoy them as they are more like the restaurants they are used to at home.

Many have formidable reputations for good food and great service, and the set menus are an excellent way for one or two people to enjoy a range of Asian dishes without ordering a banquet. While some are BYO, others offer a limited wine selection.

The three I tried on this visit demonstrate the diversity of the genre, though all three are "grand dames", having confirmed their popularity over several years. A web search will net many more.

DA PING HUO

I hope to return to this gem of a restaurant each time I visit Hong Kong. The magician in the kitchen, Wong Xiaoqiong, cooks sublime Sichuan household dishes learnt as a child from her mother. It is not showy restaurant food, but elegant household cookery, set apart by refined use of a range of chilli flavours and aromatic Sichuan pepper, not to mention her flair for delicious combinations of hot, sour, sweet and salty flavours in one dish.

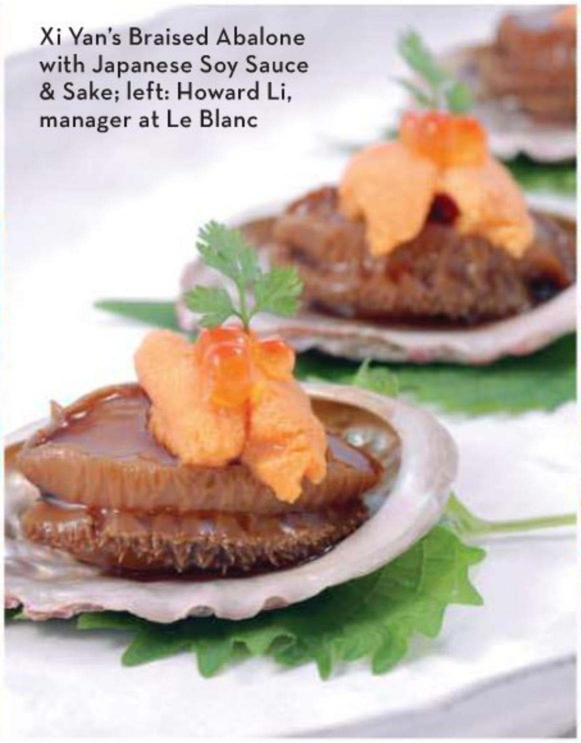
I was privileged enough to go into Wong's kitchen to watch her cook the classic ma po tofu, an aromatic dish of silky tofu, spices and minced beef, one of the delectable appetisers on her set menu. Seven shared main courses and dessert follow. Wine is sold only by the bottle. Wong's talents have also been recognised by the prestigious Mandarin Oriental Hotel, where she moonlights as a contract chef.

Wong's husband runs the dining room and his paintings enliven the careful pale décor of this chic oasis of tranquillity (there are Philippe Starck fittings in the bathroom).

After a busy night in the kitchen (the restaurant is only open for dinner so bookings are essential), Wong will appear in the dining room to enchant diners in her other role as a gifted traditional singer.

Set dinner $50
Lower ground floor, 49 Hollywood Rd, Central, ph: 2559 1317





Xi Yan's Braised Abalone with Japanese Soy Sauce & Sake; left: Howard Li, manager at Le Blanc



Le Blanc

Private kitchen décor styles are diverse: some have the feel of a family living room, while others sport glamorous designer fit-outs

LE BLANC

I loved Le Blanc. It claims to replicate a small house in southern France "filled with passion", but the rather nutty Belle Époque décor goes much further. The sixth-floor space has been partitioned by calico screens into small "dining rooms", each filled to bursting with every imaginable item of not only French but quite a lot of Chinese tat, including clocks, pictures, ornaments, dried flowers, branches of trees, buddhas, mirrors, a piano and a candelabra. The charming yet surreal, French flea market effect is accompanied by vintage French music. The three co-owners are artists, one of whom, Yves Chan, is clearly nostalgic for Paris, where he lived for 10 years.

It's all probably a bit too weird for most locals, and Le Blanc does have a large French and European clientele.

When we arrived for dinner here, manager Howard Li smilingly showed us to the kitchen to choose the wine, and made sure we understood that all we had to do was tick the boxes on the menus, with the pencils on the tables, yum cha style, to order.

The food was the same sort of good, unpretentious French bourgeois cookery that I ate when visiting friends in their local café just outside Paris a couple of years ago. Bread and goose liver pâté started us off, I then had a crisp, flaky pastry tart with roasted tomatoes and goat's cheese, followed by a perfectly cooked duck breast with braised endive and gratin dauphinois, all accompanied by a very respectable Bordeaux. The menu also offered great steaks and New Zealand lamb.

Minimum dinner charge, $50, ignore "members only" sign on the door. Level 6, 83 Wan Chai Rd, Wan Chai, ph: 3428 5824, blanc.com.hk

XI YAN

A little hard to find, even for our local minder, Xi Yan surprised as one of the swishest private kitchens I have been to. The décor has feature walls of intense vermilion, rice-paddy-green silk curtains, art glass and quirky handmade pottery.

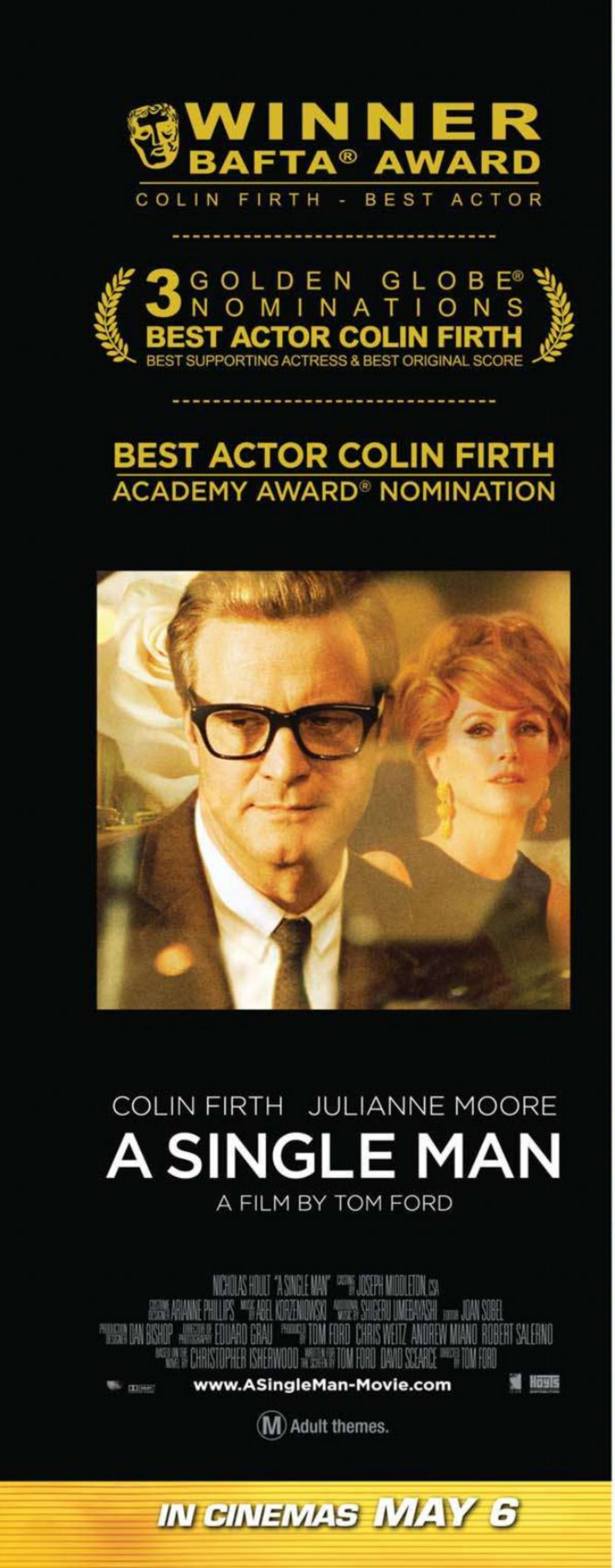
But a private kitchen it is, even though it is the flagship of a group of food outlets owned by chef-graphic artist Jacky Yu. Like many private kitchens, there is only one sitting for lunch and dinner and the menu is set, depending on the ingredients available at the markets.

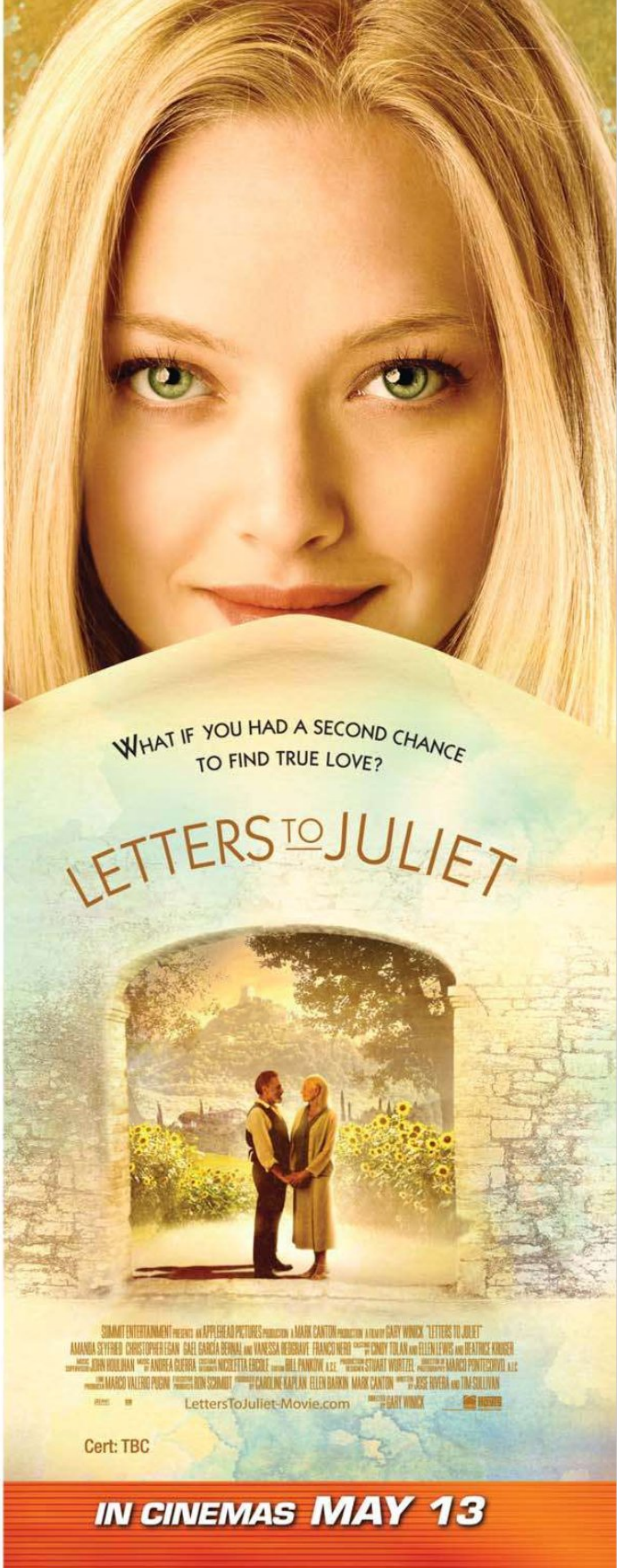
The food is modern Asian and our lunch included Japanese tomatoes with creamy wasabi and sesame sauce; crisp duck with glutinous rice and abalone sauce; Sichuan hot and spicy chicken; steamed mandarin fish in pickled gooseberry; olive and black bean paste; and satay shrimps with salted egg yolks and basil. All were sensational and maître d' Ricky Leung kept careful watch over the perfect service.

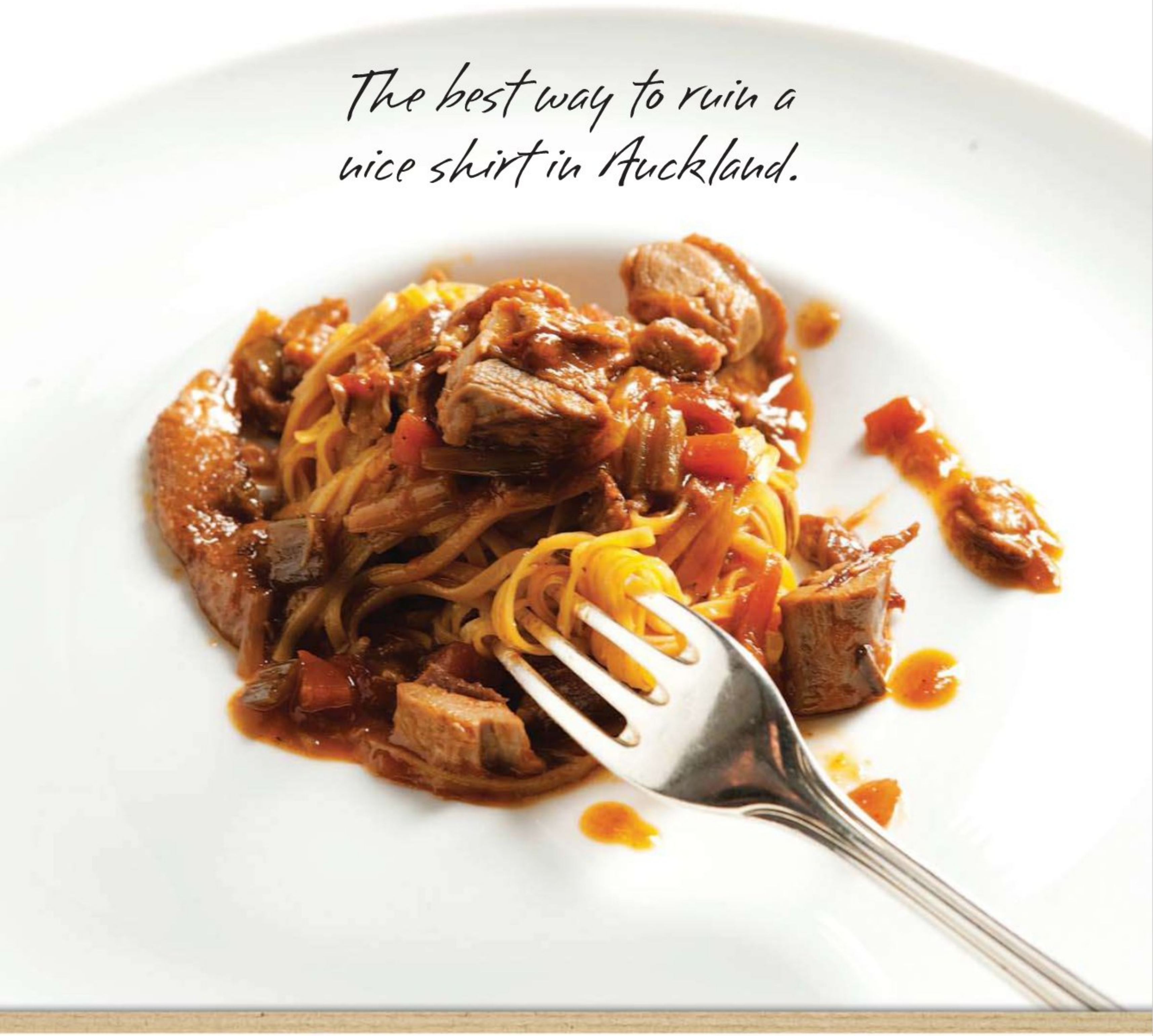
**Set dinner $80-$110
Level 3, 83 Wan Chai Rd, Wan Chai, ph: 2575 6966, xiyan.com.hk/hk**

Also: **Yellow Door Kitchen
Level 6, 37 Cochrane St, SoHo, ph: 2858 6555, yellowdoorkitchen.com.hk**

Our thanks to the Hong Kong Tourism Board for its assistance with this story. Ray McVinnie travelled to Hong Kong courtesy of Cathay Pacific, which flies direct from Auckland to Hong Kong 10 times a week. For fares and bookings see cathaypacific.co.nz


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The best way to ruin a
nice shirt in Auckland.

Edited by Toni Mason



KEN DOWNIE

Red Elephant





Red Elephant; left: Steamed Crayfish with Thai Choo Sauce

Auckland

RED ELEPHANT
★★★★
195 Khyber Pass Rd, Newmarket, ph: 09-379 8704, red-elephant.co.nz
Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner 7 days
$$$

Consistency of food and service provide a major incentive to return to any restaurant and my recent visits to Red Elephant have only confirmed its high standing in this regard.

This Thai restaurant has occupied its busy Khyber Pass site for many years and has been blessed with the same owner since 1991: the urbane Abdul Bashota, who more often than not is there to meet, greet and join the staff to serve tables.

Bashota knows how to work the room and make every guest feel special. He clearly also knows how to select staff – many of whom provide the same level of carefully modulated and helpful service as he does. Most have been with him a long time and they are always beautifully groomed in traditional Thai dress, very pleasant and highly efficient. All display a commendable knowledge of the menu – as you'd expect but it's not always so.

Three years ago, the restaurant, until then named Chang Thong, underwent a makeover and a name change that saw sassy new fittings and a coat of bright red paint for the large elephant that sits, resplendent, outside the main entrance. Everything about the refitted restaurant is spotless and orderly. The large room with generous space between tables carries off its overtly theatrical red theme effortlessly.

Yet, despite the hip Westernised interior, the food is everything we would expect of a true-to-promise Thai eatery. All the bases are well covered with Isan dishes from the north-east, Royal Thai from the middle of the country and the less fussy but equally tasty dishes from the coastal south.

All the familiar options are offered, from the ubiquitous Thai starters of which the curry puffs with sweet and spicy carrot sauce are my favourite, the range of clear and cloudy soups and the meat, fish and vegetarian dishes you find on most Thai menus. Every dish comes with the customary hand-carved vegetable garnishes to make it look as spectacular as it tastes.

But what sets Red Elephant apart is that there is much more as well, including a truly wonderful sweet and sour squid salad (yam pla muk), and a delicious beef dish called nua kata. And everything is fresh, carefully and authentically prepared, the sauces beautifully balanced with a depth and complexity of flavour that allows you to taste every single ingredient as if it is the only thing on the plate.

Now and then a waiter emerges from the kitchen with the house speciality, a chicken doused with Thai spices and brandy, flamed and brought to the table to be carved. It's a favourite with the regulars. I also like the way this kitchen does crayfish, steamed and dressed with Thai Choo Chee, a gently spicy sauce that is sweet and piquant with enough chilli to tingle the taste buds but not mask the meat's flavour. It is very good and very reasonably priced, but must be specially ordered a day in advance.

The drinks list is comprehensive and the barman expert at making a range of traditional cocktails if required.

I have a couple of quibbles amid such a polished performance. I would like the origin of some unfamiliar dishes explained on the menu, the numbering system of which looks more as though it belongs in a Chinese takeaway, and I could do without the elevator music.

With its excellent and reliable food, quirky environment and impeccable service, Red Elephant shines in a city where ethnic eateries (and those offering Western cuisine for that matter) are often highly variable in quality.

KERRY TYACK

RED ELEPHANT & THE MULBERRY, KEN DOWNIE



THE MULBERRY

★★★

425 Mt Eden Rd, Mt Eden, ph: 09-630 1588, themulberry.co.nz
11am to late 7 days
$$$-$$$$

Gastro pub. Such an ugly term. It sounds like a digestive disorder. It was coined in the early 90s when The Eagle in Clerkenwell, London, kicked off the trend of serving decent food in pubs. Good idea; bad name. The Mulberry is described on the website as a gastro-style bar and restaurant. That's no improvement, but don't let that put you off.

This is the sort of neighbourhood place that has immediately captured the attendance of locals. It has been cleverly fitted out, with a modern feel while retaining the detailing of the original building. The main bar is on street level. Upstairs is another swish bar area with black leather couches and chairs, and the dining area, which feels a little underfurnished, though the wallpapered alcove works well.

Head chef Sal Grant has an impressive pedigree, having worked at Mikano under Warwick Brown and was most recently at Parnell's Veranda Bar & Grill where we enjoyed his food last year (restaurant manager Trina Amberger is also ex-VBG). And here you'll find a good take on what a "gastro pub" should offer.





The Mulberry's Braised Venison Pie (left) and Tiger Prawns with Crab

The entrée of confit duck salad is fantastic, the sweetness of the tender meat set off by the pomegranate molasses dressing. The tiger prawns with crab and cos lettuce buoyed by a lively gazpacho dressing are a light, modern take on the old shrimp cocktail with the Marie Rose dressing.

Braised venison pie comes topped with a delightfully savoury lattice of aged cheddar, parsnip purée and a mop of escarole (fancy endive) – all very good but it could've done with a saucier filling.

Lamb rump spiced with horopito wasn't particularly pink, but was still nicely moist and tender on the inside, dressed with a tangle of mustard greens and accompanied by perfect dauphinoise spuds.

In the dessert line-up, nougat and macadamia semifreddo was a treat – wonderfully flavoured with a beautiful texture, and bread and butter pudding with an angostura-spiked mascarpone as good as I've ever had.

The wine list is well considered for a neighbourhood local, running the gamut from very reasonable to some outstanding Champagnes, and I love that there are some top Lustau sherries to choose from.

Bar manager Needham Woodward is a cocktail champion, having shaken it up at flash bars around Auckland before landing here. Take advantage of his skills immediately.

And why is it called The Mulberry? The Maori name for Mt Eden is Maungawhau – hill of the New Zealand mulberry tree. Nice.

TONI MASON







Ella's Erwin Zimmet; left: Parmesan-Crumbed Sardines

ELLA CAFÉ & LOUNGE

★★★

118 Ponsonby Rd, ph: 09-378 7979, ellacafe.co.nz
Lunch Tues-Fri 12pm to 2pm, dinner Tues-Sat 6pm-10pm, brunch Sat-Sun 10am-3pm
$$-$$$

I can't forget Stella, the very cool little restaurant that occupied this spot on the Ponsonby strip in the late 90s. I found my cat there on one visit, then a forlorn, waif-like kitten that had been scrounging about there for days. She naturally took the name.

Stella has turned out to be daft, with a personality that's more "home for the bewildered" than "chic café" and the appetite of a Sumo wrestler with the physique to match. She never lost her scrounging ways.

Some former staff members of the much-loved Stella have returned to the site, but I doubt they'll take the puss back. Owner Erwin Zimmet has named this new bistro-style café Ella in a nod to its predecessor. He worked front of house at the former incarnation and has installed head chef Becky Lamb. She cooked at Stella, which was owned by her sister. It's a beautiful thing.

Ella has been newly refurbished with dark wood walls lined with ranks of wines, reminiscent of the inner-city restaurant Merlot that Zimmet owned for six years in between his Ponsonby gigs. With comfy banquettes and warm lighting, it's a cosy, intimate spot.

Zimmet is joined front of house by Larry Quickenden, another veteran of the hospitality scene. So expect professional, experienced service.

The food, like the atmosphere, is casual and friendly. Zimmet describes it as "home-cooked style", with a touch of his native Germany as in the veal schnitzel with potato salad. But mostly the menu is contemporary European.

Of the entrées, the sardines with a parmesan crumb and aïoli were the standout – even just by virtue of being on the menu. But they were delicious – meaty and moist with a crisp crumb. The tart of tomato, goat's cheese and caramelised onions was a lovely example of a café staple. Both dishes were very reasonable at $11 and $15, respectively.

Eye fillet with hasselback potatoes and green peppercorn sauce was well executed and the meat had more flavour than you'd expect from fillet. Again, at $29.50 – the highest price on the menu – very reasonable.

An incident marred my second visit. I ordered the fish of the day from the blackboard – hapuku with roasted tomatoes, zucchini and potatoes. The fish was nicely cooked, the tomatoes full of flavour. Then my neighbour was delivered the same dish. With zucchini, unlike my serving. Too late and more fool me for not registering – I must be as daft as my cat. But when I mentioned it later, the maître d' went to the kitchen and returned to say it would have been there. Hmm, not that daft.

The zabaglione torte – think tiramisu – could have been lighter. The pavlova was just right – marshmallowy inside and crisp out. And the very reasonably priced wine list has plenty by the glass.

With a relaxed menu and fun ambience, Ella is a good night out.

TONI MASON

ELLA, KEN DOWNIE

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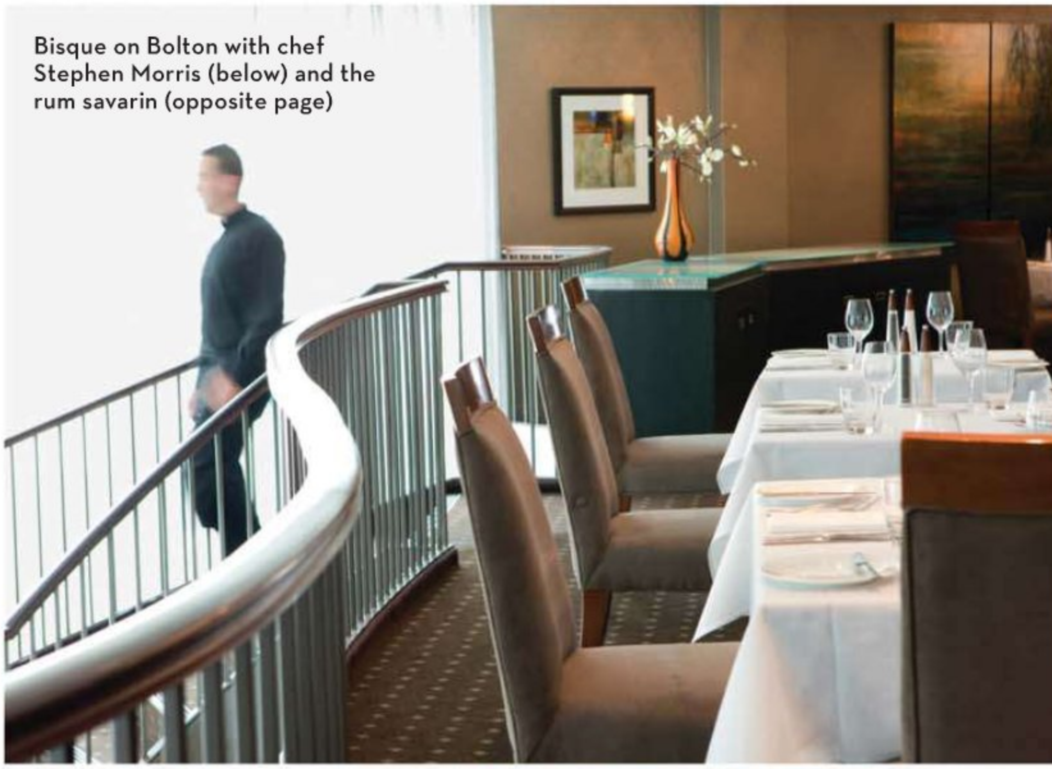
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Bisque on Bolton with chef Stephen Morris (below) and the rum savarin (opposite page)

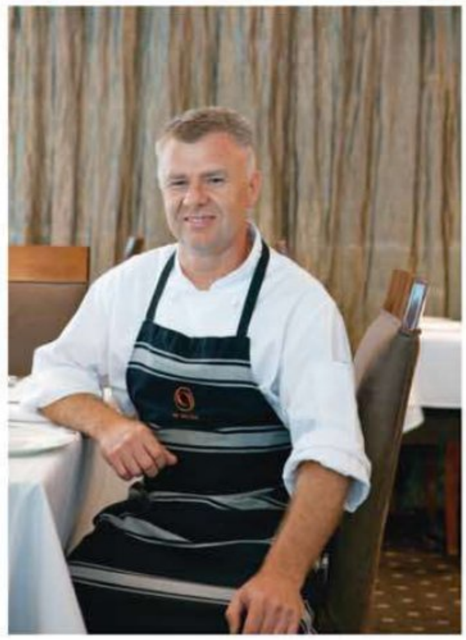
Wellington

BISQUE ON BOLTON
★★★★
Bolton Hotel, cnr Bolton & Mowbray Sts, ph: 04-462 3770, boltonhotel.co.nz
Breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days
$$$$

Before New Zealanders got proper restaurants, we dined at hotels. These were mostly owned by the two big breweries, who regarded food service as nothing more than a tiresome burden, imposed as a condition of their liquor licences. Hence, the food was bad and the service even worse: dinner was "on" at the dot of six and off again at eight, when by law the hotel dining room had to close.

As a result, nowadays a hotel is about the last place middle-class New Zealanders would choose to dine, which perhaps explains why so few of our celebrated chefs clamour to follow the example of Gordon Ramsay at The Savoy in London and set up their own restaurant within a hotel, no matter how prestigious.

A notable exception is Wellington's Bisque on Bolton, owned by local hero Stephen Morris, who has cooked for the Queen at Huka Lodge and won a



string of awards. His restaurant is on the mezzanine floor of the five-star Bolton Hotel and fitted with the same contemporary artworks and elegant suede chairs that grace the hotel's suites, studios and rooms.

Inevitably, there's a sprinkling of in-house guests: they're the ones dining alone, having ordered from the plainer, cheaper bistro selection specially offered to provide business travellers homely cooking away from home.

However, Bisque also attracts a loyal band of locals who remember Morris from his Wellington restaurants of yore – Brasserie Bellazar and Fog City Grill. One such couple dines at Bisque every week without fail.

BISQUE ON BOLTON & TINAKORI BISTRO, NICOLA EDMONDS



These are the takers for the à la carte menu, which begins with lobster bisque. For obvious reasons, this rich, tasty dish has been on Bisque's menu since day one, albeit in different permutations; currently the soup is garnished with saffron crème fraîche and a grilled prawn skewer.

As a flavour synergy, duck and crab might not immediately spring to mind, yet the combination is common in Chinese and Thai cuisines. At Bisque, crab tortellini sit comfortably alongside a mildly seasoned duck confit and over creamed Savoy cabbage with golden raisins and lentil jus.

Rather more familiar is lamb with parsnip purée, fresh peas, spinach and feta orecchiette. The lamb is marinated with star anise and cinnamon, and cooked perfectly pink in the middle. And, as with most dishes here, the presentation is precisely geometric – the way things used to be, before chefs began introducing free-form blobs of foam and spreading sauces with the back of a spoon.

The rum savarin (essentially a rum baba, only cooked in a ring mould) is totally old school– a yeast-risen brioche soaked with rum syrup. This classic cannot be improved upon, merely elaborated, as at Bisque, with fresh raspberries and espresso ice-cream.

A stone's throw from The Terrace, Bisque is central, yet has the air of a hideaway. It's a secret worth sharing.

DAVID BURTON



Tinakori Bistro

TINAKORI BISTRO

★★

328 Tinakori Rd, Thorndon,
ph: 04-499 0567,
tinakoribistro.co.nz
Lunch Mon-Fri, dinner 7 nights
$$$

As one of the oldest, wealthiest and most conservative suburbs in Wellington, Thorndon basks in all the little culinary luxuries which, as the French would say, make life agreeable.

Just as Thorndonites buy their Chablis from La Cloche, their brie from Le Marché Français and their baguette from Bordeaux Bakery, so they seem to require that their restaurants also be French: hence the clustering of Le Canard, Charlie Bill, Aubergine and the oldest and most unreconstructed of the lot, Tinakori Bistro.

Reading the Tinakori Bistro menu, you might wonder if their butter is wheeled in by the barrel and their cream pumped in by the tanker. Laced with a smidgeon of vermouth, a moat of cream surrounds the risotto cake and seared fresh scallops – a signature dish here. More cream goes around the equally popular sautéed prawns, only this time emboldened with garlic paste and a subtle shake from the Tabasco sauce bottle. Naturally, the chowder and the spinach are both creamy, too.

Indeed, all the classic French flavour synergies are on the menu: pork with Calvados, fish with fennel, beef with



Tinakori Bistro's chef Jason Su

béarnaise, chicken with tarragon, lamb with mint jus, lamb's fry with bacon.

Technically, the tranche of salmon was correct: the fish was grilled rare as requested, and both the baby potatoes and the green beans came roasted and nicely crunchy. The accompanying dill hollandaise was done completely by the book – that is, with enough butter to induce a coronary.

In tone, if not in the details, the repertoire recalls Le Beauchamp, the first French restaurant on this site 35 years ago, run by the eccentric Celine Carlier, who once scolded my then girlfriend for eating her parsley garnish.

Renamed Tinakori Bistro, this restaurant launched the careers of John Lawrence and Chris Green, now of Boulcott Street Bistro and Arbitrageur fame. For the past 10 years it has been run by Jason Su, a chef of Chinese ancestry, who trained in Wellington at several French restaurants. His sous-chef hails from Vietnam.

Su has not seen fit to meddle with the 35-year-old French formula which, after all, continues to serve him well.

Prices are affordable and this attracts a local clientele of regulars, who nowadays can be assured of a table without having to book: a major improvement has been to knock a hole in the wall through to the adjoining premises, thus quadrupling the seating capacity and turning what had once been a minute Victorian shopfront into a viable concern.

The customers, while not exactly Victorians themselves, are certainly senior enough to feel at home among the bricked-in colonial coal range, the ornate skirting boards, the original wooden floor and the safe semi-abstract paintings.

The wine list is fairly scanty and the presentation tends to be plain and unadorned – apart from the desserts, which carry on the nouvelle cuisine tradition of teasing berry coulis into spider webs and love hearts.

Tinakori may not rate a special pilgrimage, but the bistro serves its neighbourhood nicely, as well as being tidy enough for corporate entertaining.

DAVID BURTON

NICOLA EDMONDS

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The Farm at Cape Kidnappers


The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs

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Winter Food and Wine Weekend
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Wellesley St, Auckland 1141

Please specify which winter weekend you prefer to attend, should you win.

> kauricliffs.com > capekidnappers.com > airnz.co.nz

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PETER GILMORE
Saturday 11 September
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LAURENT-PERRIER CHAMPAGNE
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THE FARM CAPE KIDNAPPERS HAWKE'S BAY NEW ZEALAND · AIR NEW ZEALAND · KAURI CLIFFS MATAURI BAY NEW ZEALAND





Sézn (left) and head chef Matt Schmutsch

Christchurch

SÉZN
★★★★
705 Gloucester St, Dallington, ph: 03-381 2496, sezn.co.nz
Dinner Tues-Sat
$$$$

Sézn was once two shops in a rather drab suburban shopping strip on the corner of two busy roads. In previous restaurant incarnations it was the Cocoa Club and Trilogy. Chefs have come, been fêted and gone.

But current owner Debbie Elliston has a good eye for kitchen talent – head chef Matt Schmutsch and his right-hand man Ben Doherty display impressive skills – and is a hands-on restaurateur.

Hers is the voice on the telephone, she greets and seats, has advice on wine selections, puts out the flames when the menu gets too close to the table's candle and is a centre of calm throughout a busy service.

Seasonal fare drives the menu. In autumn this ranges from mushrooms through pumpkin and red capsicums to beetroot. The prix fixe option of $65 per person – starter, main, "shared dish" and pudding or cheeseboard – gave a generous range of selections.

Our starters included an artfully composed salad of hot-smoked salmon with diced potato, olives and green beans; a masterful duck and mushroom terrine with buttery baked toasts and tiny gherkins; and pumpkin and mascarpone stuffed tortellini. The latter's sweetness was saved by a nutty, savoury sage butter.

The Sézn way of presenting different treatments of the featured ingredient can turn the expected into exciting. The pork main combined braised pork belly with little sausages, while the venison mixed slices of roasted rump with a rich pie (however, the puréed beetroot was more garnish than side vegetable, while the potato gratin offered but a tantalising taste of potential riches).

"Shared dish" translated as a vegetable side dish, but there was plenty going on here: the broccoli for example, was dressed with browned butter and almonds, and the sautéed potatoes had chorizo and chives as garnish. The hand-cut fries with house-made tomato sauce and aïoli were a disappointment.

The wine list is comprehensive, but diners will find rewards if they accept Elliston's recommendations. It led us to a Fiddler's Green Chardonnay and a Sandihurst Pinot Noir.

At a glance the desserts are standard fare – sticky date pudding, chocolate délice, crème brûlée, lemon meringue pie – but, as with the other dishes, there are appetising tweaks. Sorbets featured heavily on our night out: gin and tonic with lemon pie, coffee with Bailey's ice-cream, blackcurrant with the chocolate délice.

The service is a textbook example of how to treat customers in a friendly but professional way.

KATE FRASER

SÉZN, STEPHEN GOODENOUGH

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SPEARGRASS INN

★★½

1300 Fruitlands Roxburgh Rd, SH8, ph: 03-449 2192,
speargrassinn.co.nz
Wed-Thu 10am-5pm; Fri-Sun 10am-late
$$-$$$

The historic Speargrass Hotel near Alexandra in Central Otago has had a new lease of life since Jackie van der Voort and James Russell bought it late last year.

A relic of 19th-century goldmining days, it was popular in the 1980s as the Fruitlands Gallery, and is again a welcoming place to stop for a coffee or meal on the road between Central and Dunedin.

Chef Joel Cowley, recently at Edgewater Resort in Wanaka, uses local produce in a simple menu that features homemade soup, pâté, ploughman's, salad, slow-cooked pork belly and scotch fillet. On weekend evenings they add specials such as a crusted rack of lamb or salmon. There's also a children's menu.

Recommended are the intensely coloured and flavoured tomato and roast red capsicum soup, and a platter of rich chicken liver pâté and duck rillettes with red onion marmalade, tangy mustard relish and a stack of homemade grilled bread. The melt-in-the-mouth slow-cooked pork belly is accompanied well by an Asian sesame slaw with crunchy roasted peanuts.

Cowley's preserves made from local fruit feature in some of his dishes. They are also for sale both in the restaurant and at the small Sunday morning farmers' market held in the courtyard in summer.

Wines are all local, made obvious on the wine list, which indicates winery locations by such phrases as "down the road and round the bend" (Three Miners) or "just down the road and up the hill" (Hinton). Almost all are available by the glass – necessary for a roadside café attracting passers-by. However, for those who want to linger, there are three comfortable motel units out the back.

CHARMIAN SMITH





Speargrass Inn (above) and chef Joel Cowley

SPEARGRASS INN, SUELLEN BOAG

RATINGS GUIDE

The ratings reflect the reviewers' experience of food, wine, ambience and service, with food given the most weight. We include restaurants that provide a reasonable experience in all or most of these areas and do not feature any restaurant that would score no stars as we regard these as less than satisfactory. Why waste our readers' good time?

★okay ★★good ★★★very good ★★★★excellent ★★★★★outstanding
$ = up to $15; $$ = $16-$24;
$$$ = $25-$32; $$$$ = $32+ for a typical main course including vegetables and GST


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at your request

MT DIFFICULTY restaurant has a wonderful pasta dish – fricelli with walnuts, artichokes, pesto and some other scrumptious things. I'd love the recipe. Can you get it for me?
Fran Vertue, Christchurch

Executive chef Werner Hecht-Wendt from Mt Difficulty (73 Felton Rd, Bannockburn, ph 03-445-3445) kindly gave us the recipe, which we have adapted slightly for home cooks. The fricelli pasta and Tutto Gusto artichokes are available from Sabato in Auckland's Mt Eden.

FRICELLI PASTA
SERVES 4

handful sage leaves
rice bran oil for frying
240g fricelli pasta
4 whole Tutto Gusto artichokes, quartered
4 teaspoons baby capers
16 oven-dried tomatoes (see At Your Request in issue 139 for method)
4 teaspoons thinly sliced preserved lemon peel
4 generous tablespoons basil pesto
pinch of both lemon pepper and Marlborough flaky salt
16 walnut halves
Whitestone Island Stream cheese (or parmesan if unavailable), grated
Cairnmuir wild thyme oil for drizzling
lemon vincotto for drizzling

Fry the sage leaves in rice bran oil until crisp. Cook the pasta in well-salted boiling water then drain and add the artichokes, capers, tomatoes, preserved lemon, pesto, seasoning and walnuts. Toss to combine until the pasta is coated.

Place in a bowl or plate and top with the crisp sage leaves and grated Island Stream cheese. Drizzle the wild thyme oil and lemon vincotto over.

CAFÉ MEDICI in Martinborough serves the most delectable dishes and a fabulous nasi goreng. Could you persuade chef and owner Nick Arnold to part with the recipe please?
Jane Harris, Nelson

Nick Arnold of Café Medici (9 Kitchener St, Martinborough, ph: 06-306 9965) gave us the recipe for this simple colourful dish. Note: crisp fried shallots and Sambal Badjak (a spicy chilli sauce) are available at Asian supermarkets.

NASI GORENG
SERVES 4-6

1½ cups long-grain rice
2 eggs
pinch of salt
2 teaspoons peanut oil
200g skinned and boned chicken breast, thinly sliced
3 shallots, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 red chillies, seeded and finely chopped
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon ground coriander
200g raw prawns, shelled and deveined
1 teaspoon sesame oil
½ cup bean spouts
1 tablespoon kecap manis
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon chopped roasted cashew nuts
2 tablespoons crisp fried shallots
chopped coriander leaves to serve
lime or lemon wedges to serve
Sambal Badjak (optional) to serve

Cook the rice in boiling salted water for 8 minutes, drain thoroughly and cool (this can be done a day ahead).

Whisk the eggs together with the salt until fluffy. Heat a frying pan and lightly brush with a little peanut oil. Pour the eggs into the pan and cook for 1-2 minutes until set. Turn out the omelette on to a chopping board, roll up and cut into fine strips. Set aside.

Heat 1 teaspoon of peanut oil in the frying pan until hot and panfry the chicken until cooked through, remove from the pan and set aside.

Heat the remaining peanut oil in a wok or deep frying pan. Add the shallots, garlic, chilli, turmeric and ground coriander, and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes. Add the prawns and stir-fry for another 2 minutes until the prawns have turned pink.

Add the sesame oil, cooked chicken and the cooled rice. Stir-fry, breaking up any lumps, until the rice is hot and tender through then add the bean sprouts, kecap manis and soy sauce, and mix thoroughly.

Spoon the rice into warmed bowls, garnish with the chopped omelette, cashews, crisp shallots, coriander and lemon or lime wedges. Have Sambal Badjak on hand if desired.

Credit: Bowl from Nest. For full details, see Credits Index.



shopper's notebook

LOOK FOR THESE PRODUCTS FROM OUR ADVERTISERS

The launch of Tohu Sauvignon Blanc 2009 coincided with the release of New Zealand's first Maori wine company's new branding and its own distinctive interpretation of the symbolic koru on the label. The wine earned five stars from senior wine judge Sam Kim, author of ***Wine Orbit***. Find it at New World supermarkets and Liquorland. RRP $18.95.





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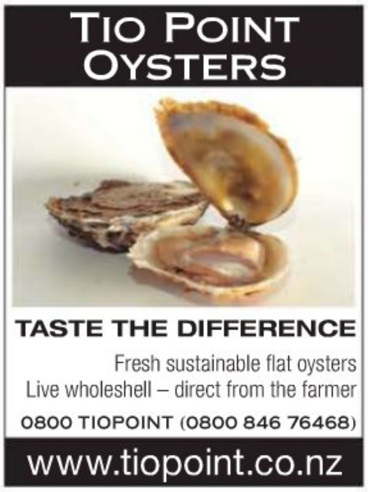


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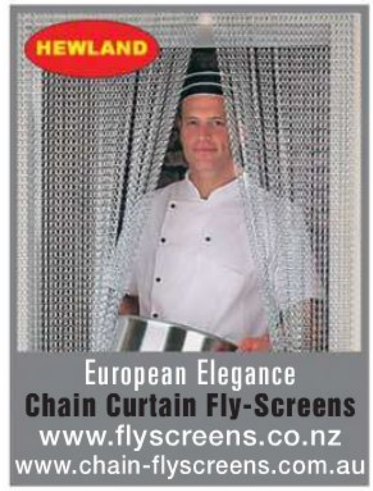
Kapiti scooped two top awards at the 2010 *Cuisine* NZ Champions of Cheese Awards, along with 35 medals. Kapiti Kahikatea Camembert won Champion Soft White Cheese and trophy-winning Kapiti Mt Herbert, a fresh goat's cheese with a lemony zing, won Champion Original New Zealand Cheese. Kapiti also won gold medals for its Kahurangi Creamy Blue and Mt Hector cheeses.





Cuisine market index

YOUR GUIDE TO EXPLORING WINE, FOOD AND ASSOCIATED GOOD LIVING







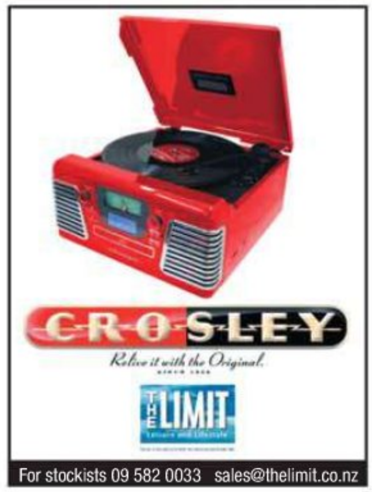


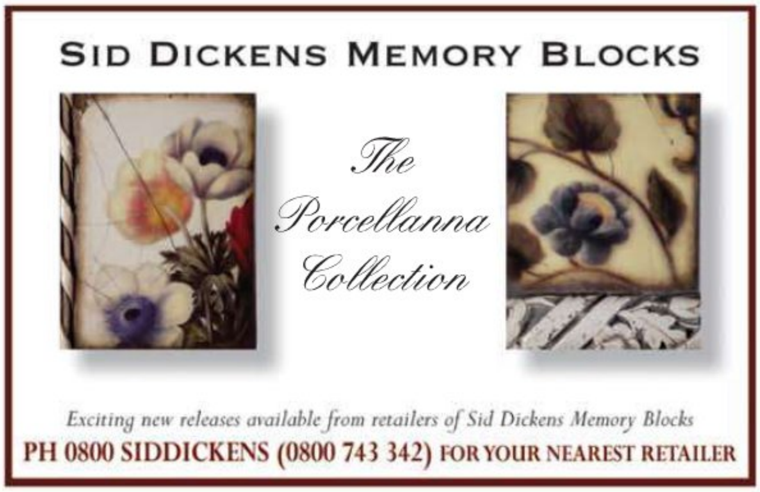





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QUICK SMART page 40
Iittala Teema plate and Sophie Conran dinner plate (The Studio of Tableware); Tony Sly plate (Cranfields).

PEAR ESSENTIALS page 56
Rosenthal TAC plate and small platter, Thomas Loft shallow bowl, Jasper Conran for Wedgwood plate, and Bernardaud Digital plate (The Studio of Tableware); white linen (Martha's Fabrics).

HEARTS OF DARKNESS page 64
Tony Sly dinner plate, pasta bowl serving platter, Terre Bronze dish, Laguiole salad servers and black pepper grinder (Cranfields); hand-blown black goblets (Lukeke Design); antique cutlery, crystal glass and green glass float (Antiques of Epsom); green glass vase and glass decanter (Fly By Night); background painted in Regime (Aalto Colour); linen (Martha's Fabrics).

FARE GAME page 72
Black-handled cutlery and black chambray napkin (French Country Collections); Rockpool dinner plate and low shallow bowl (Nest).

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Rosenthal Moon plate and pasta plate, and Paul Wirths' Vivendi cutlery (The Studio of Tableware); Queen's coronation portrait courtesy of Monterey Coffee Lounge, Grey Lynn, Auckland; Royal Doulton Bulldog (Antiques of Epsom).

SUNDAY BEST page 98
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Room Service soup plate and entrée plate (Nest); Paul Wirths' Schlossburg and Alaska cutlery (The Studio of Tableware); El Cid paella pan (Sabato).

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Bowl (Nest).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON McLEAN

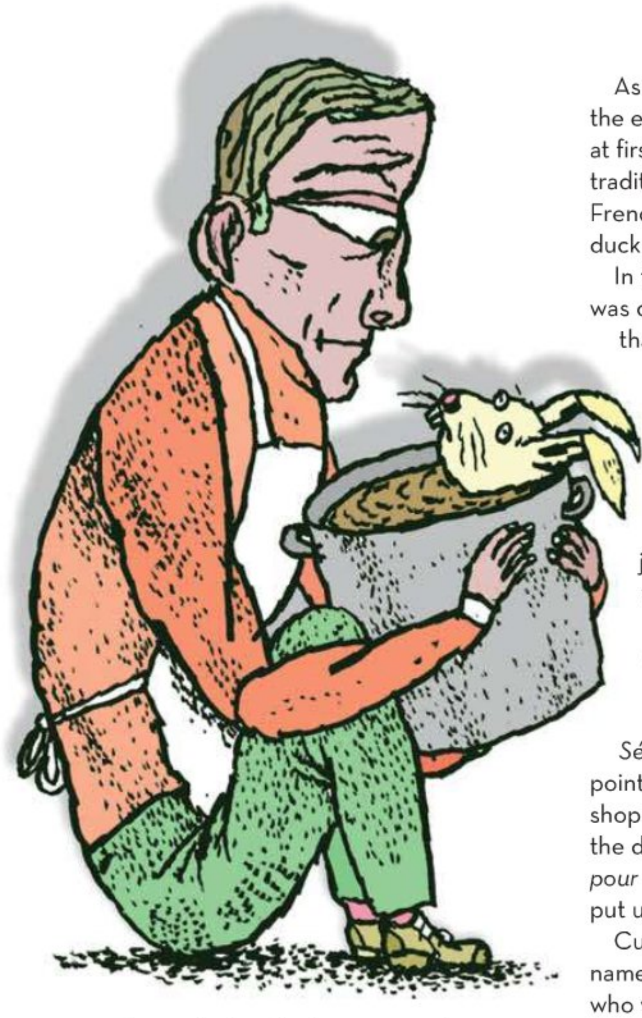



At Matua we believe in determination - it's what took us from making wine in the back of a tin shed to the forefront of the New Zealand Wine Guild.
When we first started, we operated out of a tiny tin shed. Not exactly glamorous. But we had a dream, and we wouldn't rest until we saw it come to fruition. It was this attitude that got one of our founders so much respect from his peers that he was made chair of the New Zealand Wine Guild. Today we have new dreams but the determination is still the same. After all, nothing great ever comes easy.



tales of the unexpected

Keith Austin got less than he bargained for with his own hell's kitchen



My last kitchen was nothing to write home about. Oven? Check. Benches? Not enough but check. Fridge? Check. You get the idea. Then I walked into my new Parisian apartment last year. One glance and I was thinking, "Dear Mum, you should have seen my last kitchen..."

I say "apartment" but it was actually a studio in the Cité Internationale des Arts, a Stalinist Brutalist-style complex on the Right Bank of the Seine.

My partner had scored it free for six months as part of an arts council grant to research and start writing a book, and I was along for the ride – a handbag, to be sure, but Vuitton, darling, Vuitton.

I'm not sure what I was expecting – Parisian studios not being renowned for their spaciousness – but it wasn't a windowless cupboard with a primitive two-ring electric hob and a small electric oven in which only three of the four heating elements worked.

As an enthusiastic amateur cook and the editor of two cookbooks I could see at first glance that my quest to whip up a traditional cassoulet – a sort of southern French bean stew with sausages and duck – was doomed to failure.

In fact, simply making a cup of tea was doomed to failure – we discovered that turning the kettle on when the hob and oven were being used meant all the lights went out.

I had become hooked on cassoulet when my sister-in-law, who lives in the Lozère region of southern France, gave me a jar of her local version. It was rich, wholesome peasant food and I had wanted to have a crack at it ever since.

We had an old cookbook, *Recettes des Provinces de France, Sélectionnées par Curnonsky*, which pointed out that some restaurants and shops even closed for a day to make the dish. Signs saying "*Maison fermée pour cause de cassoulet*" would be put up outside.

Curnonsky, by the way, was the pen name of Maurice Edmond Sailland, who was known as the Prince of Gastronomy in France in the 20th century. His catchphrase of the time was "*Et surtout, faites simple*!" (And above all, keep it simple!)

Still, there's simple and there's simple – even The Cur would have turned his nose up at two rings and an oven so small it could have doubled as a glass-fronted carry-box for a chihuahua with no legs.

I did eventually make a cassoulet, but it was back down in the Lozère. We gathered together all the ingredients in a casserole dish almost bigger than our new kitchen *et voilà*, a mere 18 hours later, there it was.

That day we fed four adults and two teenage boys (second helpings all round) and still had enough left over to do it all again. In the Paris kitchen we could feed that many only by pretending it was a relay race.

And so, as the cassoulet dream died, it instead became something of a challenge to come up with dishes that could be cooked on two rings, in a dodgy oven and didn't need a kettle boiled.

The answer, especially in the cold February days, was to stick to one-pot screamers, with a few vegetables lightly boiled on the other element. This was helped by the discovery nearby of a little open-air market selling everything from a mouth-watering takeaway paella to splendid cheese, wine, fruit, veg and woolly hats.

It was here we first encountered our *lapin*, on a butcher's stall resplendent with pigeons, ducks and chickens all still wearing their heads, and a glazed look that said "I wasn't expecting *that*".

One glance at that rabbit and it was love at first sight. So much so that when the butcher asked if we wanted to keep the head – and here he held it up and wiggled it about "because it was funny" – I could only concur.

I later discovered that buying rabbit in central Paris is like buying a suit in Savile Row – it's prohibitively expensive. However, a little exploring in the outer *arrondissements* eventually brought the price way down.

Anyway, the result of that purchase, and a short hunt through the weekly market at the Bastille for the glorious mushroom stall, was *lapin braisé à la mode du Keith*.

Oh, all right, it's rabbit and mushroom cider stew.

Ingredients: olive oil, 1 rabbit, 1 litre or so of cider (to just cover the rabbit), 2 carrots, 1 leek, 1 chicken bouillon cube, 2 large potatoes, 1 onion, a large handful of mushrooms (I used delicious, flavoursome lactarius but cèpes or morels or shiitake would do just as well), 1 tablespoon tomato paste, water to fill, salt and pepper to taste.

You basically chuck it all together, boil the bejasus out of it and then let it simmer for an hour or three for the meat to drop off the bones.

And go on, lob the head in if you want; the *boucher* was right – that little eye peering up from the stew is quite funny. If you don't swallow it.

ILLUSTRATION BY HENRIK DRESCHER

THE 2009 KAPITI CHEF COLLECTION

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À Deco, Kapiti Kotuku



The General Practitioner, Kapiti Sainte-Maure

Two Chefs Bistro, Kapiti Chèvre de Bellay



Every Kapiti cheese is crafted from our land, our weather, our animals and by our hands to create a unique piece of New Zealand. To celebrate this, Kapiti invited chefs from all over the country to design a dish for the Kapiti Chef Collection inspired by a Kapiti cheese. Discover the Kapiti story and the delicious recipes at www.kapiticollection.co.nz

KAPITI
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SUPREME WINNER

FINALISTS

Food styling by Fiona Smith
Food photography by Aaron McLean
Chef portraits by Tom Roberton
Recipe testing by Ginny Grant
Photographs at the Kapiti Chef Collection Awards Dinner by Paul Jones

THE KAPITI STORY

When Kapiti Cheese was born in the lower North Island 25 years ago, the New Zealand palate was changed forever. For the first time, we were given the chance to experience New Zealand original cheese, exquisitely aromatic, tasty, individualistic, handcrafted cheese that took us way beyond the familiar favourite block of yellow cheddar.

These were cheeses with names which conjured up positive images of our heritage and our landscape; they were cheeses expertly made and passionately promoted. They were new, exciting and memorable.

Since that day back in 1984, Kapiti Cheese has become a staple in the repertoire of our best chefs and commonplace on tables in our homes. The range has expanded with contemporary packaging, but the heart of the cheese, the philosophy behind Kapiti and its commitment to excellence remain intact.

In this booklet we showcase the eight finalists in the 2009 Kapiti Chef Collection. All worked creatively with New Zealand's most highly regarded and awarded cheese to create the following innovative dishes.

"CHEESE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FOOD THAT BOTH SOPHISTICATED AND SIMPLE HUMANS LOVE"

MFK FISHER, HOW TO COOK A WOLF (1942)

See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses



ABOUT THE KAPITI CHEF COLLECTION

In 2008, Kapiti once again showed the great innovation it is recognised for by creating a unique partnership between some of the nation's finest chefs and artists. The Kapiti Collection 2008 is a portfolio of original work from five great artists who took a Kapiti cheese as their inspiration. It also includes the recipes of five leading chefs who took the same cheeses and created the first ever Kapiti Chef Collection.

This season Kapiti extended the concept, inviting more than 100 chefs from Cape Reinga to the Bluff to create a dish to celebrate Kapiti's contribution to our dining scene. The recipes had to be New Zealand originals and feature Kapiti cheese as the hero.

The chefs responded and last November, in association with *Cuisine*, a team of the nation's food experts visited more than 40 of our top restaurants and cafés to find the best cheese-inspired dishes for the 2009 Kapiti Chef Collection.

From these outstanding contributions eight finalists were chosen to take part in an awards dinner for celebrated New Zealand guests, where the Supreme Winner was announced as best representing the innovation of Kapiti and the nation's love of cheese.

Competition for the top spot was fierce and as well as the eight finalists, 11 other chefs nationwide were highly commended for their entries.

A MATURING COOKING SCENE

It's been a happy revelation finding well-considered, inspired cheese dishes from chefs around the country. We saw classic combinations given a contemporary twist; brave interpretations of where cheese fits in the menu; and acknowledgement of how to bring out the best in a variety of local ingredients using cheese.

Chefs have shown they are not afraid to cook with cheese and have found original, often clever ways to serve it in both hot and cold forms, using easy-to-find and non-mainstream cheeses in simple and complex ways.

The finalists included chefs from regional restaurants, supporting our view that creating great food is not the prerogative of big city restaurants.

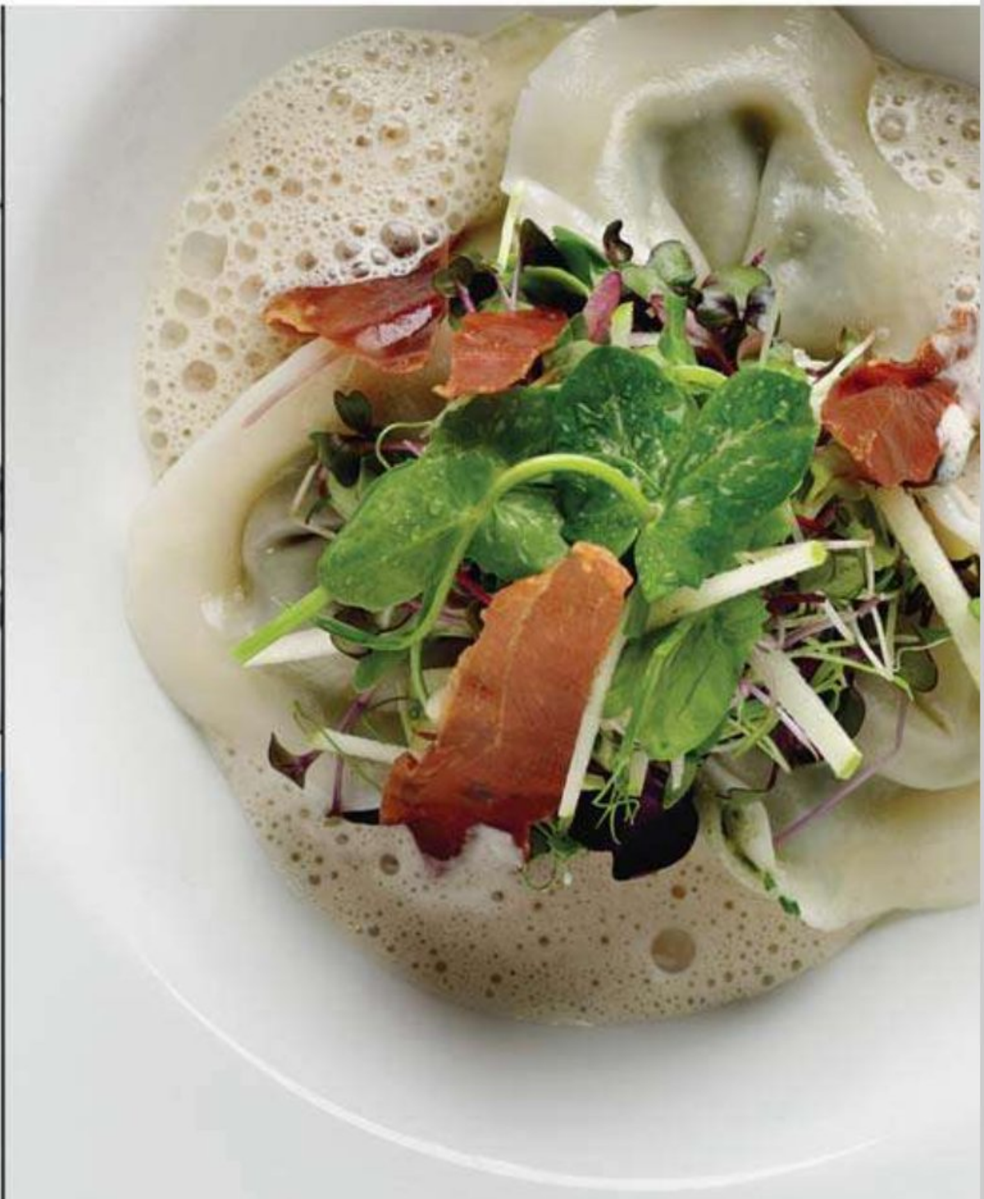
This is the sign of a maturing cooking scene and it is extremely encouraging to see our chefs taking the opportunity to give cheese a new focus on their menus, creating highly adventurous cuisine in the process.

There is clearly a depth of understanding about cheese, its potential and its acceptance by diners that has until now gone relatively untapped.

We hope to see chefs use their skills and become a lot more confident with putting cheese on the menu. If what we have tasted during our journey around the country is any indication, cheese devotees are in for a very pleasant surprise.

Kerry Tyack
Head Judge, 2009 Kapiti Chef Collection





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This elegantly French-themed restaurant is a firm favourite with locals in the know, but less familiar to Wellington visitors. All that will now surely change as news of the success of chef Laurent Loudeac spreads.

After training in Châteaubriant, France, Laurent worked in top hotels in Switzerland, at the Hilton in London and at Sydney's Level 41.

His cooking style is based on French cuisine using traditional techniques and recipes with a modern twist. Quality is paramount as are local and seasonal ingredients.

Laurent's entry was, in the judges' opinion, a perfect combination of tastes and textures; deceptively subtle flavours with expertly executed pasta cheekily showcasing the delicious creamy Kapiti Kikorangi.

KAPITI KIKORANGI TORTELLINI ON CREAMED LEEK WITH MICROGREENS & PARMA HAM

TORTELLINI

170g Kapiti Kikorangi, at room temperature
2 tablespoons finely chopped curly parsley
pinch of New York Cut pepper (available at specialist stores) or use white pepper
12 thin round wonton wrappers

Blend the Kapiti Kikorangi and the parsley in a food processor until smooth. Season with pepper and set aside.

See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses

Place the wonton wrappers on a bench and spoon a small amount of the cheese mixture into the middle of each.

Brush around the edges of the wontons with water, fold over to pinch and seal the edges then pull together the two corner pieces and seal.

Place the tortellini on a tray lined with cling film. Cover with cling film and refrigerate until required (they will keep for a couple of days).

CREAMED LEEK

2 tablespoons olive oil
½ white onion, diced
1 leek, white part only, washed and finely diced
200ml white wine
150ml cream
salt and pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat.

Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes then add the leek and cook for a further 5 minutes without colouring.

Add the white wine and cook until almost all the liquid has gone. Add the cream and reduce by half so that the leek is cooked and the mix is slightly wet.

Season to taste and set aside.

WALNUT FOAM

1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ white onion, finely diced
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
80g walnut pieces
200ml chicken stock
200ml cream
salt and pepper to taste

In a small saucepan heat the oil, add the onion and garlic and cook gently until soft.

Add the walnuts and cook for a further 3 minutes then add the chicken stock. Cook until the stock has reduced by half then add the cream and reduce by half.

Using a handstick blender, blend the sauce, pass through a fine sieve and season to taste.

Keep the sauce warm by placing in a metal milk jug over a pot of warm water (or use a double boiler).

TO GARNISH

4 slices Parma ham
50g walnuts, toasted and puréed in a food processor to a paste
½ handful microgreens
½ handful pea tendrils
1 tablespoon walnut oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra for adding to the apple
½ apple, preferably Granny Smith, julienned and tossed in lemon juice to prevent discoloration

TO SERVE

Preheat oven to 150°C. Place the Parma ham slices on a baking tray lined with silicon baking paper. Bake for 5 minutes or until golden. Remove and cool (the ham will crisp up as it cools).

Cook the tortellini in boiling salted water for 4-5 minutes. Warm the creamed leek and place a spoonful in the middle of 4 soup plates. Place 3 tortellini on top of the leek and add a dollop of walnut paste to the cavity of each. Foam the sauce with a handstick blender and spoon over each tortellini.

In a small bowl toss the microgreens and pea tendrils with walnut oil and lemon juice, add the julienned apple and toss thoroughly.

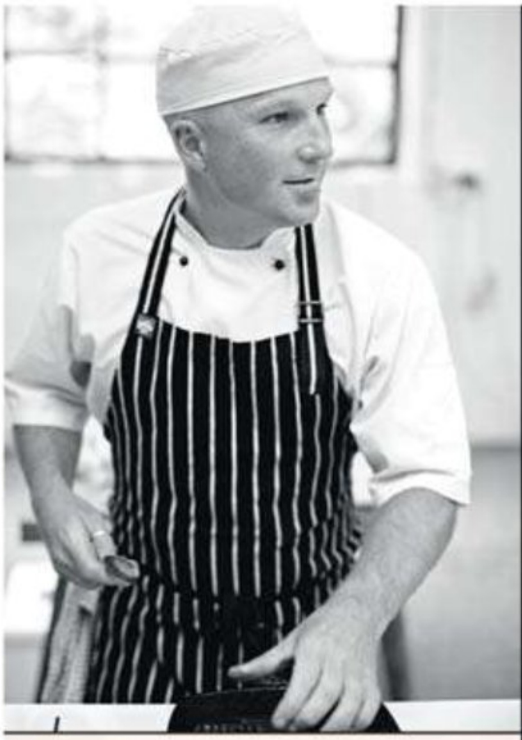
Place a mound of greens on top of the tortellini.

Break each slice of ham into small shards and arrange around the salad.

NOTE

Once the foam has been added to the plates you'll need to finish and serve the dishes quickly as the foam will collapse after a few minutes.

SERVES 4



À DECO

70 KAMO RD, KENSINGTON, WHANGAREI

PH: 09-459 4957

LUNCH WED-FRI FROM 12PM
DINNER TUES-SAT FROM 6PM

À Deco is something of a fortunate anomaly in the way it offers superbly elegant, sophisticated dining amidst the more simple homes of a comparatively quiet Whangarei suburb. Set back from the road in a quintessentially 1930s-style stucco house with subtropical gardens, the multi-award-winning restaurant is in the capable hands of urbane chef Brenton Low and his team.

The menu is a combination of contemporary cuisine favouring local produce prepared with classic expertise and presented with the style equal to any city high-street bistro.

For his entry, Brenton took the classic steak sandwich and cleverly transformed it into a veritable work of art celebrating the special character of Kapiti Kotuku, while staying true to the steak and mushroom that forms the basis of this toasted Kiwi favourite.



KAPITI KOTUKU & MUSHROOM TOASTED STEAK 'SANGA'

WATERCRESS MAYONNAISE

2 egg yolks
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
300ml olive oil
juice of ½ lemon
salt to taste
½ bunch watercress, picked and washed

Place the egg yolks, mustard and vinegar in a food processor and mix well. Add the oil in a slow steady stream until the mayonnaise is thick. Taste the mayonnaise and add lemon juice and salt as required. Blanch the watercress in boiling water for 1 minute then refresh in cold water. Drain and squeeze dry then blend to a very fine paste and add to the mayonnaise.

This recipe makes more mayonnaise than required for the recipe but it keeps in the refrigerator for up to one week.



MUSHROOM PURÉE

2 tablespoons olive oil
100g button mushrooms, stalks removed, and sliced
200g field mushrooms, stalks removed, and sliced
150ml cream
1 teaspoon salt

Place the oil in a heavy-based saucepan then add the mushrooms and cook on a medium-high heat until all the moisture has gone and the mushrooms have darkened in colour. Add the cream and cook for a minute or two until reduced a little. Blend in a food processor and season with salt. Keep warm or heat as required.

ROSEMARY CIABATTA

4 slices ciabatta, cut thinly lengthwise
olive oil for drizzling
1 teaspoon chopped rosemary leaves

Place the bread on an oven tray, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with rosemary. Bake at 150°C until crisp.

CRUMBED MUSHROOMS

8 small button mushrooms, wiped clean
2 tablespoons flour
1 egg, lightly beaten
100g sourdough breadcrumbs
vegetable oil for frying

Make these while the steak is resting. Crumb the button mushrooms by coating with flour, then egg and finally the breadcrumbs. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the mushrooms and fry until golden. Drain on paper towels.

TO COOK & SERVE

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 x 150g Angus sirloin steaks
200g Kapiti Kotuku, cut into wedges
200g oyster mushrooms
1 field mushroom
½ bunch watercress

Season the steaks then barbecue or grill to your preference. Allow the steaks to rest for 5 minutes. Slice each steak into 3 and place on an oven tray. Top each slice with a wedge of Kapiti Kotuku then place under the grill to lightly melt the cheese.

Cut the field mushroom into 4 slices and grill. In a frying pan, sauté the oyster mushrooms with a little olive oil and keep warm.

Place the steak portions on 4 warmed plates. Between each slice place a crumbed mushroom and some of the oyster mushrooms. Add a spoonful of mushroom purée on one side, topped with a slice of the grilled field mushroom. On the other side spoon some of the watercress mayonnaise. Garnish the steak with picked watercress and add a slice of toasted ciabatta.

SERVES 4





TWO FIFTEEN BISTRO & WINE BAR

215 DOMINION RD, MT EDEN

PH: 09-630 6474

twofifteen.co.nz

LUNCH FRI FROM 12PM
DINNER TUES-SAT FROM 5.30PM

Jeremy Schmid opened his Two Fifteen Bistro & Wine Bar early in 2009 and it has since become a favourite with food-conscious Aucklanders.

Schmid previously headed up the kitchen of Auckland restaurants Orbit and Palazzo Roma, before striking out on his own. Two Fifteen is a local bistro with a relaxed atmosphere and stylish setting, where diners can enjoy simple dishes using carefully prepared, high-quality ingredients, presented by friendly, helpful waitstaff.

With his typical attention to detail, Jeremy created a wonderfully simple entry using Kapiti Goat Feta in tandem with walnuts, rocket and apricot. It was a complete and satisfying meal that paid equal attention to aroma, taste and texture.

KAPITI GOAT FETA & EGGPLANT QUENELLES WITH WALNUT & ROCKET SALAD & APRICOT SWIPE

APRICOT SWIPE

150g dried New Zealand apricots
1 slice fresh ginger

Cover the apricots and ginger with water in a saucepan and simmer until soft. Drain the water and retain. Remove and discard the ginger. Place apricots in a blender and purée until smooth, using a little of the water until it is a spreading consistency. Chill until required.

 See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses



CANDIED WALNUTS

90g sugar
150g walnuts

Place the sugar in a saucepan, add a couple of tablespoons of water and heat to a caramel.

Add the walnuts and coat with the caramel then place on a sheet of non-stick baking paper and cool. Once cool, break up and store in an airtight container.

KAPITI EGGPLANT QUENELLES

2 eggplants
2 tablespoons canola oil
1 medium onion, sliced
2 sprigs thyme
140g Kapiti Goat Feta
salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place the eggplant on a baking tray and bake until soft. Remove from the oven and when cool enough to handle, peel and set aside.

Heat a frying pan, add the oil and sauté the onion and thyme until the onion is softened.

Purée the eggplant, onion mix and Kapiti Goat Feta in a blender until smooth. Season well and chill.

KUMARA CRISPS

2 gold kumara, peeled
canola oil for deep-frying

Make the crisps just before serving. Thinly slice the kumara and deep fry at 150°C for a few minutes until crisp but uncoloured. Drain on paper towels.

TO SERVE

small handful rocket leaves
shavings of Kapiti Goat Feta
olive oil for drizzling

Swipe some apricot purée on the plate and add 2 quenelles of eggplant purée. Garnish with rocket, candied walnuts, kumara crisps and slices of Kapiti Goat Feta. Dress with a little olive oil.

SERVES 6



MOUNT BISTRO RESTAURANT

6 ADAMS AVE, MT MAUNGANUI

PH: 07-575 3872

mountbistro.co.nz

DINNER TUES-SUN FROM 5.30PM

The Bay of Plenty seaside magnet of Mt Maunganui is home to the appropriately named Mount Bistro and its creative chef-proprietor, Stephen Barry, known for his flair and innovation.

His restaurant is always busy, but Stephen finds time to compete in as many competitions as he can. He won the 2007 Monteith's Beer and Wild Food Challenge and such contests keep him inspired.

Cheese is a special passion. The addition of poached pear and red onion marmalade gave his savoury Kapiti Kikorangi cheesecake the attractive versatility of serving as a stand-alone lunch plate or a dessert dish to finish.



SAVOURY KAPITI KIKORANGI BLUE CHEESE & WALNUT CHEESECAKE

RED ONION MARMALADE

3 large red onions, peeled and finely sliced
150ml red wine vinegar
300ml red wine
200g sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Place all ingredients in a heavy-based saucepan over a high heat. Bring to the boil then turn the heat to low and simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft and translucent and most of the liquid has been reduced. Take off the heat and cool.

 See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses



CHEESECAKE BASE

125g fresh breadcrumbs
50g walnuts
25g butter, melted

In a food processor, pulse the breadcrumbs and walnuts until coarsely chopped. Add the butter and pulse until combined. Press the mix into the base of a lined 18cm springform cake tin. Chill until required.

CHEESECAKE FILLING

250g Kapiti Kikorangi
175g Kapiti Cream Cheese
50g red onion marmalade
2 eggs
2 tablespoons chopped chervil
2 tablespoons cream
20g flour

Preheat oven to 160°C. Place the Kapiti Kikorangi, cream cheese and red onion marmalade in a food processor. Process to combine then add the eggs, one at a time. When well mixed, add the chopped chervil and cream, then mix in the flour. Pour the filling on to the walnut base.

Place a tray of warm water in the lower oven to keep the atmosphere moist. Place the cheesecake in the centre of the oven for 10 minutes then turn the temperature down to 120°C and cook for a further 30-40 minutes or until the cheesecake is set but still slightly wobbly in the centre. Chill in the tin until firm.

WALNUT & PARMESAN BASKETS

75g Kapiti Pamaro
75g Kapiti Aged Cheddar
75g walnuts

Place all ingredients in a food processor and chop to a fine crumb. Shape and place 6cm discs of crumb mix on a baking sheet lined with silicon baking paper. Bake at 180°C for 8-10 minutes until the edges turn golden. Remove from the oven and shape each while still hot over the base of small greased ramekins.

SPICED WALNUTS

125g walnuts
1 egg white, lightly beaten
2 teaspoons Cajun spice
40g caster sugar

Toss the walnuts in just enough egg white to moisten them then coat with the Cajun spice and caster sugar. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with silicon baking paper then spray lightly with cooking oil to help prevent them sticking together.

Bake at 180°C for 4-5 minutes until golden, stirring occasionally. Cool and store in an airtight container.

RED WINE REDUCTION

375ml red wine (Mount Bistro used Mills Reef Merlot Malbec)
125ml red wine vinegar
125g caster sugar

Place the wine and vinegar in a saucepan and reduce over a high heat to 100ml of liquid. Add the sugar and stir over the heat until the liquid comes to a full boil and the sugar has fully dissolved. Cool and pour into a squeeze bottle with a fine nozzle.

POACHED PEAR

2 ripe pears
200ml red wine
1 cinnamon stick
2 star anise

Peel, cut in half and core the pears then place in a shallow stainless steel frying pan. Add the wine, cinnamon and star anise. Poach for 15-20 minutes, turning occasionally until cooked through.

TO GARNISH

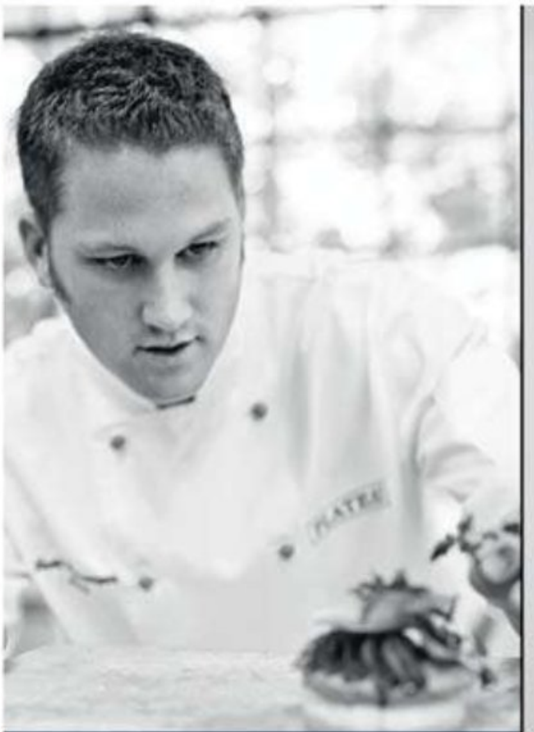
Kapiti Crème Fraîche
Sango Sprouts
Kapiti Kikorangi wedges

TO SERVE

Cut the cheesecake into 12 portions, using a hot knife and wiping the blade between slices. Drizzle a little red wine reduction on each serving plate and add a slice of cheesecake.

Slice a quarter of a pear into a fan shape, add some Kapiti Crème Fraîche and fill the walnut and parmesan baskets with a few spiced walnuts. Garnish the cheesecake with Sango sprouts and place a wedge of Kapiti Kikorangi on the side.

SERVES 12



PLATEAU RESTAURANT & BAR

64 TUWHARETOA ST, TAUPO

PH: 07-377 2425

plateautaupo.co.nz

LUNCH/BAR MEALS/DINNER 7 DAYS

Regular guests at Taupo's popular Plateau Restaurant & Bar are used to the innovative food that comes from the kitchen of young chef Jude Messenger.

With an acute eye for detail and a mature palate, Jude adds his own twist to familiar dishes, raising the bar beyond the level of typical bistro fare. By carefully combining tastes and textures, he ensures that every meal on the Plateau menu is memorable.

Jude's standout Kapiti Kikorangi tart brought to the plate a blend of sweet and savoury ingredients. The gently bitter kick of the witloof against the citrus emulsion kept the dish alive until the final mouthful.



KAPITI KIKORANGI TART WITH CANDY PECAN NUTS, WITLOOF & CITRUS EMULSION

ONION COULIS

300g yellow onions, peeled and thinly sliced
60g butter, diced
60ml water
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon caster sugar
1½ teaspoons lemon juice

Preheat oven to 150°C. In a medium-sized ovenproof saucepan, cook the onions with the butter until soft but uncoloured. Add the water, salt, sugar and lemon juice. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and bake in the oven until the onions are very tender (around 30 minutes), then strain off the liquid. In a food processor purée the onions finely. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses

PICKLED RED ONIONS

¼ cup sugar
¼ cup white wine vinegar
½ cup water
1 red onion, peeled and thinly sliced

Bring the sugar, wine vinegar and water to the boil, pour over the onion then cool to room temperature. Store in an airtight container for up to one month in the refrigerator.

WHITE WINE POACHED PEARS

3 ripe green pears, peeled, cut into quarters, core removed and edges trimmed
1 cup caster sugar
1 cup dry white wine
2 cups water

Bring the sugar, wine and water to a simmer to dissolve the sugar. Bring to the boil, add the pears and cover with a circle of baking paper. Bring the liquid back to a slow boil and remove from the heat.

Allow the pears to cool in the liquid (they should be just tender). Store in an airtight container for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

CANDY PECAN NUTS

50g pecan nuts
pinch of salt
90g sugar
90ml water

Cook the pecan nuts in boiling salted water until tender. Drain the water and dry with a clean tea towel. Bring the sugar and water to the boil, add the nuts and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain the nuts and place on a lined baking tray. Bake at 150°C for 20-30 minutes or until golden and shiny. Cool then store in an airtight container. The pecans will keep for a couple of days.

CITRUS EMULSION

250ml freshly squeezed orange juice
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon lime juice
125ml mild-flavoured olive oil
pinch of salt
pinch of sugar

Reduce the orange juice to around 50ml or until it is a light syrup. Add the reduction and the citrus juices to a blender and slowly pour in the oil on a medium speed to form a smooth dressing. Season with the salt and sugar. Store in an airtight container for up to one week in the refrigerator.

TO COOK & SERVE

300g Kapiti Kikorangi
500g puff pastry
icing sugar for caramelising pears
2 heads witloof
picked watercress to garnish

Divide the Kapiti Kikorangi into 50g pieces and use a spatula to smooth into 9cm rounds (do this between two sheets of cling film) then refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up the cheese.

Roll out the puff pastry to 3mm-5mm thickness, cut into 6 x 10cm rounds and chill for 30 minutes. Place the rounds on a large baking tray lined with a silicon baking sheet. Cover the pastry with a second silicon baking sheet to encourage an even rise and bake at 220°C for 10 minutes or until golden.

Cut each pear quarter into 3 while still attached to the base and fan out. Dust with icing sugar then caramelise each fan under a grill or in a frying pan.

Warm the onion coulis and spread 2 tablespoons on each pastry round then top with the Kikorangi discs.

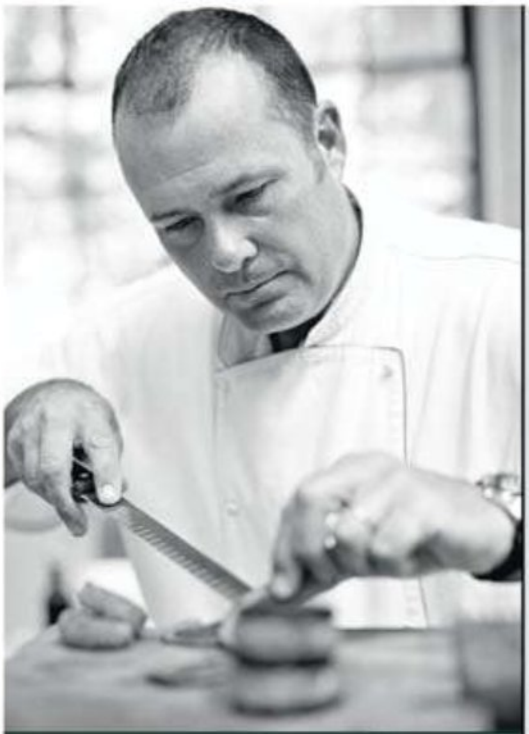
On each of 6 medium entrée plates, place a fanned pear quarter on one half of each tart.

Pull off the witloof leaves and trim with scissors (you will need 3 leaves for each tart). Use the citrus emulsion to generously dress the witloof, pickled red onions and candy pecan nuts.

Divide the salad evenly among the 6 tarts, building them and adding the undressed watercress as you go, on the opposite side from the pears.

Dress the plates with a little extra citrus emulsion and serve.

SERVES 6





THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER

CNR WILLIS & BOULCOTT STS, CITY

PH: 04-499 6001

thegp.co.nz

LUNCH/DINNER 7 DAYS

Len Baldwin is an icon on the Wellington restaurant scene and the immensely popular General Practitioner on its prominent corner site in the central city is just as well known.

Executive chef-partner at the gastropub and winner of the 2008 Monteith's Beer and Wild Food Challenge, Len uses his considerable skill to weave delectable combinations of taste and texture into every dish.

His entry demonstrated his ability to present classic combinations, in this case beetroot and cheese, with contemporary flair. Expertly executed, his creative venison carpaccio was presented as a tower.

VENISON CARPACCIO WITH KAPITI SAINTE-MAURE GOAT'S CHEESE & BEETROOT GÂTEAU

VENISON

300g venison short loin
salt and freshly ground pepper
oil for searing

Trim the meat, season generously and sear in a hot pan with the oil for 1 minute on each side. Allow the meat to cool, then tightly wrap in cling film into a neat round and refrigerate overnight.

BEETROOT ROUNDS & RELISH

500g large beetroot, washed
¼ cup New Zealand Pinot Noir, plus around 250ml extra for marinating
¼ cup red wine vinegar
3 tablespoons wholegrain mustard
2 tablespoons truffle oil
3 tablespoons manuka honey
30ml brandy
1 teaspoon finely chopped thyme leaves
salt and freshly ground pepper

See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses



Boil the beetroot in salted water until tender then peel and slice into ½ cm-thick slices. Punch out circles using a 6cm pastry cutter and marinate in 250ml (or more to cover) Pinot Noir for 24 hours. Reserve the trimmings. For the relish, grate the beetroot trimmings in a food processor then transfer to a mixing bowl. Stir in the remaining ingredients and season to taste with salt and pepper.

WATERCRESS PESTO

100g pine nuts, toasted
2 cloves garlic, peeled
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 bunch watercress
1 cup freshly grated parmesan
2 tablespoons anchovy oil (from a can of anchovies)
lemon juice to season
salt and freshly ground pepper

Purée all ingredients in a food processor except the lemon juice, salt and pepper then use those ingredients to season to taste.

KAPITI SAINTE-MAURE GOAT'S CHEESE

1 Kapiti Sainte-Maure goat's cheese
flour for dusting
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 cups brioche crumbs

Cut the Kapiti Saint-Maure into 1cm slices. Dust with flour, dip in the egg and then in the brioche crumbs.

PINOT NOIR REDUCTION

325ml New Zealand Pinot Noir
1 cup sugar

Reduce the Pinot Noir slowly in a saucepan with the sugar until sticky.

TO COOK & SERVE

oil for frying cheese

With a very sharp knife slice the venison as thinly as possible, placing 8 pieces around the edge of each plate.

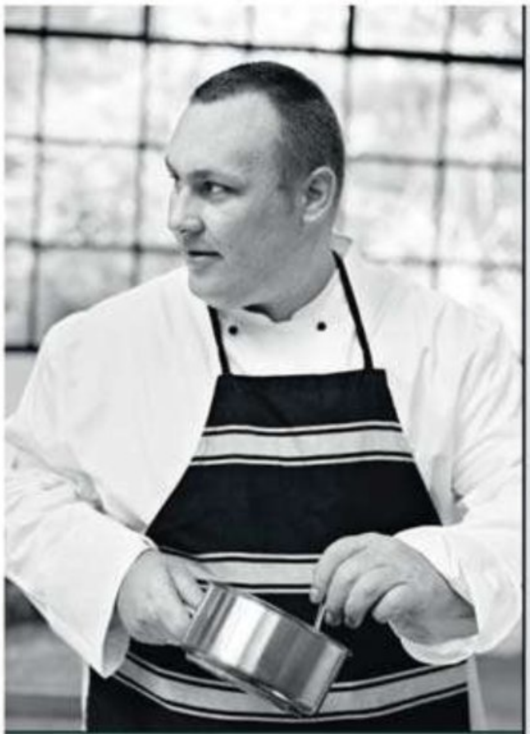
Warm the beetroot circles in a pan with some of the Pinot Noir marinade.

While the beetroot is warming, deep fry the cheese slices until golden then drain on paper towels.

In the centre of the plate alternate beetroot circles and goat's cheese slices with a dab of relish between each.

Liberally drizzle the pesto and Pinot Noir reduction around the plate.

SERVES 4





THE LAKES RESTAURANT AT PEPPERS CLEARWATER

CLEARWATER AVE,
HAREWOOD, CHRISTCHURCH

PH: 03-360 1002

clearwaternz.com

LUNCH FRI-SUN
DINNER 7 DAYS

Set among the manicured surrounds of a world-class golf resort, The Lakes Restaurant enjoys views across the water to the greens. It's a bright, open space catering for golfers after their rounds, as well as casual diners who come for the ambience and the food of talented head chef, Ben Clark.

Ben impressed the judges with his well-considered entry, deceptively simple in presentation but packed with flavour and texture.

The subtlety of the Kapiti Mt Herbert was lifted by the classic addition of beetroot and given a wonderfully local twist with the fresh piquancy of the watercress. The vincotto provided roundness and depth, perfectly complementing the texture of the other main ingredients.

See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses



Trophy-winning Kapiti Mt Herbert won Champion Original New Zealand Cheese at the 2010 *Cuisine* NZ Champions of Cheese Awards

MT HERBERT & BEETROOT TART WITH WATERCRESS & VINCOTTO

800g baby beetroot
360g puff pastry
80g sugar
40g butter
120g Kapiti Mt Herbert
½ bunch watercress tips
vincotto for drizzling

Boil the beetroot in salted water until tender, cool in cold water then peel and halve.

Roll out the puff pastry to 3mm-5mm thick then cut 4 circles each 1cm larger than the blini pans (usually 12cm in diameter). Chill for 30 minutes before using.

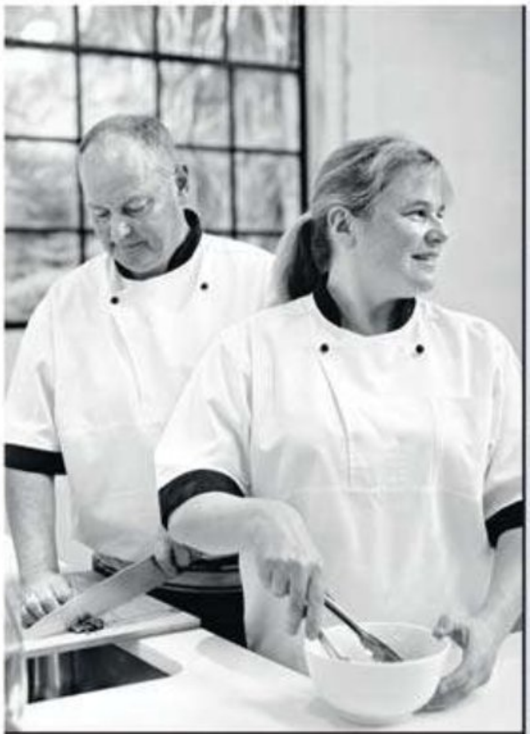
Preheat the oven to 200°C. Divide the sugar among 4 blini pans and heat until it starts to turn light golden in colour. Remove from the heat, place 10g butter in each pan and add the beetroot, cut side up.

Top each with a pastry circle, tucking the overlap into the pan. Bake for 15 minutes or until the pastry is golden.

Invert the tarts on to a baking tray, crumble the cheese over and return to bake for a further 5 minutes.

Transfer to plates, top with watercress, drizzle with vincotto and also dot the plates if you wish.

SERVES 4



TWO CHEFS BISTRO

121 STUART ST, CITY

PH: 03-477 7293

LUNCH/DINNER 7 DAYS

Popular Dunedin chefs Helen Mason and Grant Cockroft have forged an enviable reputation in the city with a reincarnation of their restaurant in a new location near the Octagon.

Furnished along the lines of a French bistro, it has become a preferred eatery for diners. The menu celebrates the pair's love of traditional French cuisine, but also recognises how food styles such as Mediterranean and Asian can contribute to the dining experience.

Elegant in its simplicity, the Two Chefs entry showed just how successful intermingled sweet and savoury tastes can be. The exploding freshness of the pomegranate seeds offset the oily eggplant and the moreish pie filling melted in the mouth.



PITHIVIER OF KAPITI CHÈVRE DE BELLAY WITH WALNUTS & APPLE PINOT NOIR PASTE, & ROASTED EGGPLANT SALAD & VINCOTTO

CRÈME FRAÎCHE PASTRY

190g butter, chilled
300g flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
190g crème fraîche

Chop butter into cubes and mix with the flour and salt in a food processor until the mix resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the crème fraîche and pulse until just incorporated. Remove from the food processor and bring together into a ball. Divide the pastry in half (you will only need one half for this recipe – freeze the rest for another use). Chill for 30 minutes.

Roll out the pastry on a floured board to 5mm thick. Using a round 8cm pastry cutter, cut out 4 bases then use a 10cm cutter to make the 4 lids.

 See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses



APPLE PINOT NOIR PASTE

1kg Granny Smith apples, coarsely chopped
2 cups sweetened apple juice (Two Chefs used Phoenix Organic Apple Juice)
peeled rind and juice of 2 lemons
1½ cups Pinot Noir
275g caster sugar
4 cloves

Place the apples in a heavy-based saucepan with the apple juice, lemon rind and juice.

Bring to a boil and cook until the apple is soft. Pass through a mouli to remove the apple core and seeds.

Place the puréed fruit in a clean pan and add the Pinot Noir, caster sugar and cloves. Cook for 1¼ hours, stirring occasionally.

The paste is ready when a spoon passed through the paste makes a visible line.

Bottle in sterilised jars. This recipe makes more than is required, but it keeps well.

WALNUT PASTE

100g walnuts
50g prunes

Pulse in a food processor to a chunky paste.

TO COOK & SERVE

120g Kapiti Chèvre de Bellay
1 egg, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 200°C.

Egg wash the edge of the smaller pastry rounds and place a 30g piece of chèvre in the centre of each.

Top with a dessertspoon each of walnut and apple paste.

Cover with pastry lids and seal edges.

Place pies in the refrigerator to rest for 30 minutes.

When ready to bake, use a small knife to make a pattern of rounded cuts on the pastry tops then egg wash.

Bake 30-35 minutes or until golden brown.

EGGPLANT & POMEGRANATE SALAD WITH POMEGRANATE & MINT DRESSING

2 small red onions
1 eggplant, sliced
¼ cup olive oil
zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon sumac
salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 180°C. Peel the onions, halve and cut each half into 4 wedges.

Combine in a bowl with the remaining ingredients. Place in a large roasting dish and roast for 30 minutes or until the eggplant is golden brown.

FOR THE DRESSING

2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 clove garlic, crushed
¼ teaspoon sugar
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped mint
salt and pepper

Whisk all ingredients to combine.

TO SERVE

1 pomegranate, seeds reserved
1 tablespoon freshly chopped mint
2 handfuls picked and washed watercress
vincotto for dotting

Place cooked pies on serving plates.

Combine the eggplant salad with the pomegranate dressing, watercress, fresh pomegranate seeds and mint.

Place a pile of eggplant salad beside the pie and dot some vincotto on the plate.

SERVES 4

ILLUSTRIOUS KIWIS DINE WITH KAPITI

The eight chef finalists in the 2009 Kapiti Chef Challenge came from around the country to present their inspirational dishes to a table of celebrated New Zealanders including poet Sam Hunt, actor Robyn Malcolm, award-winning author Emily Perkins, broadcaster Paul Holmes, stage and screen legends Jennifer Ward-Lealand and Michael Hurst, former All Black Josh Kronfeld and top winemaker Rod McDonald. All were unanimous in their praise of the winning dish by Supreme Winner, Laurent Loudeac, of Wellington's Hippopotamus.


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Pictured at the 2009 Kapiti Chef Collection Awards Dinner at Auckland's Gala café:

1 The eight finalists accept a round of applause

2 (From left) Jude Messenger (Plateau Restaurant & Bar), Grant Cockroft (Two Chefs Bistro) and Josh Kronfeld

3 Helen Mason (Two Chefs Bistro)

4 Ben Clark's winning entry (The Lakes Restaurant at Clearwater)

5 and **6** Sam Hunt entertains

7 Stephen Barry (Mount Bistro Restaurant) serves his winning entry

8 Icons Abound (styling by LeeAnn Yare)

9 Len Baldwin (The General Practitioner) accepts his certificate from head judge, Kerry Tyack

10 (From left) Josh Kronfeld, Gina Klarwill of Kapiti, Rod McDonald, Robyn Malcolm, Paul Holmes and Emily Perkins

11 Supreme Winner, Laurent Loudeac, of Wellington's Hippopotamus

See the website to find out more about the Kapiti Chef Collection or the range of New Zealand original cheeses





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